

Out of the quagmire of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

走出強迫症的泥潭

DENG YUN TIAN (邓云天)

Morita Therapy can cure...

- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Somatoform Disorder
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Chronic Depression

Brief introduction of Morita Therapy

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morita_therapy
<http://www.todoinstitute.org/morita.html>

Morita Therapy is effective in treating neurosis, particularly OCD. This has been recognised by the academic circle and a large amount of patients. According to statistics, the recovery rate is between 70% and 75%.

To be simple, Morita Therapy is 'let nature take its course' and 'do what you should do'. 'Let nature take its course' means that, we have to respect and adapt to the law of nature. In face of obsessive thoughts, we should neither control nor reason them out. This will only intensify and become even more sensitive to the obsessive thoughts. To correctly understand 'let nature take its course', we have to know what the 'nature' is. We know that there are days with full and crescent moon, and sunny and cloudy days. This is nature. Before we human beings exist on earth, the earth is already present. This fact cannot be changed with willpower, we can only respect and accept the fact so that we can be at ease. If not, we are asking for trouble.

'Do what you should do' is to withstand pain in doing what we should do, not to be stopped by obsessive thoughts and wasting a whole day in thinking about them. Or else, we will forever fall into the quagmire of obsessions, not being able to save ourselves. It is very wrong trying to get rid of symptoms. The process of 'recovery' is not to get rid of symptoms ourselves, but to allow the recovery to happen spontaneously. It is impossible to recover if we actively try to get rid of symptoms. If 'let nature take its course' and 'do what you should do' are successfully done, symptoms will gradually disappear naturally.

Author:

Deng Yun Tian, originally called Deng Dan, is a psychological consultant from China, and a member of Chongqing Psychological Association. He was born in 1981. He was once a psychological consultant of Chongqing Mingliang Psychological Consultant Firm. Now, he has opened up Yuntian OCD Psychological Studies And Consultation Workshop (云天强迫症心理研究咨询工作室 <http://www.ocdzj.com/forum.php?gid=1> (only in Chinese)). He has been publishing articles and psychological comments on magazines like 'Psychologist', 'Feng Cai', newspapers like 'Jian Kang Ren', 'Xin Nu', 'Chongqing Morning Post', and Chongqing Times'. Moreover, he was a guest host of Chongqing TV series 'No Barrier Tonight' and Chongqing Stories Broadcasting of a spiritual tv programme. He is expert in treating neurosis such as OCD, anxiety, Hypochondriasis, social anxiety disorder and depression. He has written 'Out of the quagmire of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder-A collection of Morita Therapy advices' (Chinese:《走出强迫的泥潭——森田疗法指导集锦》). In 2010, he published 'Morita Therapy of OCD' (《强迫症的森田疗法》) together with Professor Shi Wanghong of The Fourth Military Medical University.

Translated by Henry Chung

Hey guys, should you find out any English or other mistakes, please feel free to contact me. Well, if you want to contact the author through me, or me myself (I'm an OCD veteran from Hong Kong), you are more than welcome. Here is my email: ricenri03@gmail.com

The reason why I translate this book is because it can help a lot of English-speaking people with OCD worldwide. Morita Therapy is probably the best therapy in curing OCD.

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The true meaning of ‘let nature take its course’

Morita Therapy is a better way of treating OCD, and ‘let nature take its course’ (顺其自然) and ‘to do what we should do’ are the core principles of the therapy. To understand these two principles correctly is the precondition that determines if the treatment works.

In the reality, many patients do not understand ‘let nature take its course’ deep enough, or they misunderstand it. That makes the treatment ineffective. Even worse, they start to doubt the effectiveness of Morita Therapy itself. The reason behind is because they merely understand its meaning literally. They think that ‘let nature take its course’ is ‘let nature goes unchecked’, which is not to control their own problems, allowing themselves to continue suffering when they are feeling painful. For example, OCD patients may mistake that ‘let nature take its course’ is to let themselves to keep on having compulsion.

To correctly understand ‘let nature take its course’, we have to clearly know what ‘nature’ is. In another word, you have to know what the ‘law of nature’ is. For instance, day alternates with night, there are rainy days as well as sunny days. They cannot be controlled by mankind, we have to accept and follow these laws in order to live happily. If people keep on complaining about why there is night time, or believe that raining is not what it should be, then the ‘law of nature’ is infringed. Self-induced sufferings will be the result.

We, as human beings, also have ‘law of nature’ in us, like emotion. We cannot control emotion. It itself has a system of happening and vanishing. You accept it, follow it, and comply with it, and it will finish running its own system and vanish quickly. If you do not, it won’t vanish quickly. As an example, if you have to sit an important exam soon, you will feel anxious and nervous. In fact, this is a totally normal psychological reaction. If you do not care about your emotion, it will

disappear or convert to a force that pushes you to study hard. But if you think that anxiety and nervousness should not happen to you, then you are infringing the 'law of nature'. The feeling of anxiousness and nervousness will intensify. Another example is about a patient of social phobia. He is introvertive-whenver he speak with a stranger, he feel nervous and uneasy. He thinks that he should not be like that, so he tries to pretend in front of strangers as if he is not nervous. The result is that he became increasingly nervous to an extent that he became nervous before acquaintances. Why does that happen? It is because he violated his own 'law of nature'. His personality is not outgoing, and an introvert's personality is being shy. When he talks with strangers, surely he will feel nervous and uneasy. But he does not accept his own 'law of nature', fighting against it. That is why that happens.

Moreover, human beings themselves have a natural phenomenon, which is the appearance of horrible, strange, nasty and indecent thoughts. Here we will call them 'distracting thoughts'. Distracting thoughts are just like emotions, they also have their own mechanisms of happening and vanishing. If you accept their presence, knowing that they are insignificant and meaningless 'distracting thoughts', not to care about them, then they will not affect you very much. They will disappear quickly. If not, if you try to pay attention to them and debate about them within yourself, then you will be 'tied' and restricted by them. For example, when a good student is having his lesson, a distracting thought arise in his mind-'I have to kill the teacher.' This distracting thought scared him a lot, he thought that such thoughts should not appear. He think himself is too scary. Hence, he reproaches himself and wonders why such thought has arisen. And in doing so, obsessive thought is created. The reason behind the origination of the student's distracting thought is very simple. It is because the teacher is very strict on students' studies, generating a great amount of stress in his students. This distracting thought is a way to vent his stress of his subconscious mind. To let the student understand how the subconscious mind works is not very practical. However, if this student had understood in the first place that the origination of distracting thoughts was perfectly normal and will surely happen, he would not have minded that distracting thought, and obsession would not have formed.

What is mentioned above is the word 'nature' of the phrase 'let nature take its course'. Then, what is the true meaning of 'let nature take its course'? It is also rather simple, it just means that you should, with the precondition of understanding the 'nature', not to care too much about those distracting thoughts and emotions of the 'law of nature'. Let me show you a figurative example: Let a calm lake represent our thoughts, and ripples created by throwing stones into the lake be our distracting thoughts. Now, what would you suggest so as to stop the ripple from arising, to continue throwing stones into the lake, or just not to care about it? The latter one is surely the correct answer. We do not need to care about the ripple. Not needing to care about the ripple is what 'let nature take its course' means.

Definitely, to let 'let nature take its course' be effective to your problem, this principle has to come hand in hand with 'do what we should do'. So as to say: when you 'let nature take its course', you

should also focus more onto the objective reality. When you should work, just go to work, when you have to study, just go to study, do what you think you should do. Just do it! Surely, at first those thoughts and concepts that bewilder and confuse you will still make you feel painful. Nonetheless, if you know that they are destined to disappear sooner or later, trying hard to do well in what you should do, then those emotions and distracting thoughts will disappear without our awareness.

The two reasons that makes OCD hard to be cured

OCD is a kind of psychological sickness which is not very easy to be cured. The excruciating pain it brings to people is hard to be understood by others who have no such experience. Quite a number of OCD patients are using Morita Theory to treat their own OCD, but the results are sometimes far from satisfactory. Clearly, this is not because Morita Therapy is not good, but because of not understanding the spirit of Morita Therapy correctly. Article “The true meaning of ‘let nature take its course’” has discussed that. Here I will further analyse other reasons for the failure of one’s treatment using Morita Therapy.

1. Everyone are prone to have compulsion

OCD patients’ greatest wish is probably not to have the slightest amount of compulsive thoughts. Although this wish is good, it is also dangerous. It is because not to have the slightest amount of compulsive thoughts is an idea of perfectionism. It will insert a hidden danger, hindering the escape of the whirlpool of OCD.

In our life, every one of us is destined to encounter some setbacks, adversities, and dilemmas. At such times, we will all be troubled, and keep on thinking in our mind what we should do to solve those problems-especially when we are making important decisions. Sometimes we may think about them for a very long time. These, from another point of view, are obsessive thoughts. This is why everyone is prone to have obsessive thoughts. It is just that for those healthy people, when things have been solved, obsessive thoughts also end.

Therefore, OCD patients should give up the wish of not having any obsessive thought. If you keep on holding on this wish, the inevitable obsessive thoughts in your life will join force with your OCD to intensify your symptoms. This is one of the reasons why OCD is hard to be cured, because obsessive thoughts cannot be rooted out totally.

In fact, the greatest pain OCD inflicts to us is neither the obsessive thoughts nor obsessive behaviours. It is the anxiety, nervousness and insecurity that come along with those thoughts. Just think: If you are currently calm and even joyful, then even when you are having the symptom of thinking a problem repeatedly, will you feel as painful as before? Hence, to cure OCD, do not treat symptoms as your archenemy. Instead, accept them. Only by accepting them can they be less important to you, and you will feel calmer. And only when you are calm can your symptoms be

relieved and disappear.

2. The propagation of obsessive thoughts

OCD has a characteristic which is easy to propagate. It means that initially, we may have just one obsessive thought, but later on obsessive thought increases in number. They can happen continuously, one after another, or they can happen at the same time. Generally speaking, those who have OCD are comparatively more introverted, and at the same time, they are perfectionist, persistent and sensitive. After having OCD, the symptoms induced them to be even more sensitive, thus creating the propagation. In the point of view of their behaviour, it is because they have formed a habit of obsession. From the point of view of psychological analysis, the propagation is actually a manifestation of unresolved psychological conflicts.

So how can we prevent the propagation of OCD? The answer is simple. First of all, we have to realize the existence of the propagation. When there is the propagation, you don't need to care about those obsessive thoughts that keep you thinking non-stop. Instead, you should do what you should do, then the propagation will affect you less. Definitely, sometimes those obsessive thoughts may seem correct, giving people an impression that we **have to** think about them. But bear in mind, this is a trap, if you think about it, then you will fall into the vicious cycle of obsession.

I will give you an example to let you understand clearly about the propagation. For example, someone is just obsessively thinking if people think he is weird at first. Because this conflict in his mind is unable to be resolved, he starts to have obsessions about other stuff. For example, while he was watching a tutorial video about human anatomy, a thought arises in him, which is why human beings have to be divided into male and female, and he keeps on thinking about this problem. And then, he suddenly wonders if the door of his apartment is locked when he is away from home. So he creates obsession about this problem, thinking about it again and again. Then another problem arises, so on and so forth. Things that cause obsessions keep on increasing because of the propagation of OCD. If he knows in the first place that obsessions can propagate, when he is confronting the propagation, he will be alert. He will also realize that it is not the problems (e.g. why human beings have to be divided into male and female) that are causing trouble, but that the symptoms are propagating. Knowing these, his anxiousness will decrease while at the same time being able to have a reason to 'let nature take its course', not to mind about his symptoms.

The curing of insomnia with Morita Therapy

Insomnia is a prevalent problem of people these days, and there are two reasons that cause it: Psychological and physiological factors. Physiological factor refers to insomnia caused by physical discomforts, sicknesses or pains brought forth by injury; Psychological factor refers to insomnia caused by psychological confusions. In the reality, because of increasing social pressure,

psychological factor is becoming more dominant as the cause of insomnia.

Those who have insomnia caused by psychological factor are initially perplexed by matters they confront in their daily life. Anxious and worrying, they start to have insomnia. In this stage, it is still not very problematic as every one of us faces matters confusing us at times. Therefore, having insomnia is perfectly normal. In this case, people can get better in a week in general. However, if people misunderstand sleeping or used some wrong psychological methods to treat insomnia, insomnia will intensify. This time, the main cause for insomnia is no longer those matters that perplex oneself, but another problem: If I cannot fall asleep once again, what can I do? In other word, the fear of insomnia itself has become the cause of insomnia. For those who are at this stage, they are scared about the night. They may even become anxious when they see their bed.

Here, I will introduce to you the way of using Morita Therapy of Japan to cure insomnia caused by psychological factor.

1. First of all, we need to obtain correct understandings about insomnia, as I have previously mentioned. Everyone face perplexing matters at times in our daily life, so it is very normal to have insomnia. Therefore, when insomnia arises, we should not force ourselves into overcoming it as soon as possible, because the more we try hard to overcome it, the more your mind is concentrated, and you will get more excited. How can you sleep when you are excited? That is why we have to adopt a correct attitude in treating insomnia, which is to accept insomnia, or even to enjoy it, we do not need to think or care about it. Do not take it so seriously. By doing so, insomnia will not be troubling and perplexing to you.
2. The second point is to know more about the pattern of sleeping. Sleeping is a natural physiological phenomenon. It has its own mechanism to make us fall asleep. Hence, when you are worrying and not able to fall asleep, you do not need to worry about your insomnia problem. You only need to close your eyes and lie on your bed, the sleeping mechanism will naturally allow you to fall asleep. This is why I advised you not to think about insomnia, or care about it in the previous point. Surely, the time for one to fall asleep varies from people to people, but no matter it is long or short, simply remember not to care or think about it.
3. The third point is to know about the effect of the length of sleeping on us. Often, we are worried about not being able to fall asleep because of the fear of a poor sleep will adversely affect our health, studies or work of the next day. Actually, the length of sleeping varies from person to person. Some people have to sleep for 10 hours each night to have enough energy during the daytime; Some people, on the contrary, only need 4 hours, or even 2. However, scientific researches show that an adult generally requires only 5 hours per day to sleep. So even if you have slept for not enough 5 hours, this is not a problem, as you can rest at midday on the next day. Regarding the impact of not having enough sleep to our health, we can sum up in one sentence: There is nobody on earth who die because of insomnia.
4. It is better if we have a regular time for sleep. For example, you should not be like sleeping at 12am this day, 2am the next day, and 9pm on the third day. Moreover, you should get up at a

specific time in the morning. Do not lie on the bed in the daytime when you are not having any problem. Instead, you should work when it's time for work, and study when it's time for study. Sleep when it's time to sleep at night.

If you can understand the above four points deeply, and be persistent in using them, they will definitely be beneficial to your insomnia.

Should we employ psychological or medical treatment to cure OCD

OCD is a kind of neurotic disorder, its main symptom is the emergence of certain thoughts and behaviour again and again. The cause of OCD is a mystery to this day, but what we know is that it is closely related to the personality, psychological trauma in the past (especially problems related to sex) as well as stressful experiences.

These days, doctors are prone to employ one of two major kinds of treatment. One is medical treatment and the other is psychological treatment. But which one is actually more effective?

In the past, I had treated some patients of OCD. They had been seeking doctors for treatments long before, but they had not been cured. The longest one had 10 years of treatment history. This is because they were purely employing medical treatment.

We know that the main causes of OCD are psychological factors, such as perfective, sensitive and introverted tendencies as well as wrong mode or wrong habit of thinking. Medical treatment is mainly used to achieve a positive treatment result by regulating physiological mechanism. Therefore, medical treatment is not directed against the cause of OCD, and hence it can only be a temporary solution. It can merely be used to temporarily control the symptoms, but not to cure OCD and the symptoms. There is an ancient Chinese saying: 'sickness of the heart has to be cured with medicine of the heart' (心病还需心药医, similar to 'no herb will cure love'). Hence, psychological treatment should be the dominant way of treating OCD. Correcting weaknesses of one's personality and wrong mind-set or habit is the only way of rooting out OCD.

However, I should also mention that, for those who have comparatively more serious OCD, employing psychological treatment alone in the early stage of their treatment can be problematic. That is because psychological treatment generally requires a certain amount of time to understand and put the theories of the treatment into practice in order to be effective. Once symptoms of OCD arise, if patients have not yet correctly understood the theories, there will be a failure of the psychological treatment. The patient may lose faith in psychological treatment as a result. This may lead him into withdrawing psychological treatment or purely seeking medical treatment. He is therefore unable to be cured.

As such, to cure OCD, a correct method of treatment should be based on the seriousness of one's symptoms. To those patients with milder symptoms, only psychological treatment should be employed, and no drugs is needed; To those with more serious symptoms, the more effective method

should be to mainly employ psychological treatment, while assisting with drugs. The general procedure is as follows: In the early stage of a treatment, some drugs can be taken to control and stabilize the development of the symptoms, while at the same time employing psychological treatment. When patients have achieved certain results of psychological treatment in practising it, psychological treatment should continue, and drug usage should be reduced. Finally, no drugs should be used.

Accept the symptoms

In fact, no matter if it is patients of OCD or any other patients of psychological illness, the first thing we should do is to accept symptoms. For sure we deeply feel the sufferings that symptoms bring to patients, and we profoundly know of the profound aspiration of rooting out their illnesses. That is why their non-acceptance, remorse, or even hatred towards their symptoms is understandable. But what I want to say is that even though these are understandable, if you really do that, you are going against the aspiration of curing OCD.

Here I will tell you why only by accepting the symptoms can OCD be cured with an analogy. For example, if our hand or leg is scraped, leaving behind a patch of blood clot, what should we do to remove the blood clot? The correct way is very simple, which is to accept it, there is no need of taking care of it, because when the skin of this layer of blood clot has fully been healed, it will naturally shed off and disappear.

If we liken the blood clot to OCD, what are patients of OCD doing to it in the reality? They keep on scratching the clot, eager to remove the clot forever within seconds, and the result? The result is definitely bleeding more and more, and the clot become larger than ever. And OCD is held tightly by patients in this way, never able to be removed.

Therefore, to face the symptoms that have arose, the only way we can do, and the only way that can allow us to be cured is to accept OCD, you do not need to treat the symptoms as problems. Their intensity will be reduced with our capacity of accepting them, and will naturally disappear.

Do what you should do

If we have to choose the most effect theory, I believe it must be to 'do what you should do'. What does that mean then? Basically, it means that you have to work earnestly on what you should do, for example, to eat, sleep, chat, learn, have some entertainment, work, go shopping, sweep the floor, wash your clothes, repair things, so on and so forth. These are what you should do.

Let's think, what is the greatest difference between OCD patients and normal healthy people? Their main difference is that OCD patients have forgotten to 'do what they should do', forgetting that they should eat, sleep, chat, study, have entertainments, work, go shopping, sweep the floor, wash

your clothes, repair things...Instead, they spend all their energy focusing on each of the thoughts and emotions. Therefore, as time goes by, vicious and persistent thinking and emotional habits are formed. And thus, OCD is born.

So what about those normal people? They do not have OCD because they are constantly 'doing what they should do'. Their attentions are not focused on a particular thought or emotion, they are focusing on things that they should do in the reality. That is why OCD will not occur on those people.

Now, conversely, how can we eliminate our OCD symptoms? It is self-evident that from now on, you have to 'do what you should do', which is let yourself focus on eating, sleeping, chatting, learning, entertaining, working, going shopping, sweeping the floor, washing your clothes, repairing things, so on and so forth. You should try your best to finish those stuffs. At the same time, you do not need to care about your symptoms (you cannot do anything about it by that anyway). As time goes by, that vicious and persistent thinking and emotional habits will be changed, OCD symptoms will disappear naturally by 'doing what you should do'.

Perfectionism is a double-edged sword

One of the characteristics of OCD and other patients of neurosis is that they are perfectionistic. Not only are they striving very hard to make things in their external environment to be perfect, they also require themselves to be perfect and outstanding. Surely, there is nothing wrong to regard oneself as outstanding, this is a good self-evaluation. This can raise one's self-esteem, and aspiring to be perfect in things in the external environment is in fact the motivating force for the development of the human society. We can say, if people do not aspire things to be perfect, the society will not have improvements.

So if there are goods of being perfectionistic, so why perfectionistic people finally get OCD? The reason is simple- because perfectionism is a double-edged sword. Appropriately perfectionistic can enhance one's development. But overly perfectionistic, in the other word, perfectionism with arrogance and prejudice, will only bar one's development. Unfortunately, OCD and other patients of neurosis are often overly perfectionistic. Their self-evaluations are often out of contact with their capabilities in the reality. Definitely, what I mean by 'out of contact' is not that they have utterly no capabilities, but that they have mixed up capabilities and potentials (potentials means 'capable of being but not yet in existence', and capabilities means you are capable of being now). They always think that they have fully expressed their potentials, and they are perfect persons. Therefore, there is always one thought in their mind: I am of higher class than those ordinary people, and I am a genius...

Because of that, they impose harsh requirements on themselves, not allowing themselves to have even the slightest flaws. Hence, they attach great importance on their images in others' eyes, often

blaming themselves for their flaws and insufficiencies. If they cannot correct their flaws in the long term- actually we can say, no matter how hard they work on themselves, they can never correct their flaws, as what they want is to be a perfect and flawless person, is there a perfect person in this world? No, so they will fall into the vicious cycle of self-blaming, self-pity and complaint. Over time, they will form difficulties and obstacles in socializing, as they cannot accept that they are a person with flaws and are not as good as some people in others' opinion.

At such times, together with introverted personalities and some psychological problems in their upbringings, such as psychological trauma, sex-related psychological problems, and cognitive deviations, it is very likely that neurotic disorders such as OCD, anxiety disorder, depression and phobia may emerge.

Therefore, perfectionistic personality has to be corrected if OCD is to be cured. The method is to view things objectively. We have to realize that there is no perfect person or thing on earth, we can only move closer to perfection, but we can never reach it. At the same time, do not impose on yourself a criterion that requires you to be perfect. You should allow yourself to have flaws and shortcomings, because everyone has flaws and shortcomings. In short, you should learn to treat yourself better, be tolerant and accepting to yourself. Only by doing so can your heart regain calmness from conflicts, and OCD be cured.

I remember that Mr. Shoma Morita has said that those who have OCD are outstanding people, and only outstanding people can have OCD. Their difference with healthy and outstanding people is that OCD patients have expressed the shortcomings of an outstanding person, and healthy and outstanding people have expressed the strong points of an outstanding person instead. This is indeed gems of wisdom, worthy of reflecting deeply on it!

Think more and do less versus think less and do more

To explain what OCD is, we can in fact use 'think more and do less' and 'think less and do more', these two phrases to explain.

Why does a person get OCD? It is because he thinks too much and does too little. I guess no one will disagree, right? OCD patients, let us reflect: Are you spending more than 90% or even more of your time on thinking those meaningless questions which have no answers, not paying attention to stuff like eating, learning, working, studying and playing?

And why does a person does not get OCD? Because they spend at most 50% of their time on thinking, and 50% of their time on doing things-well, it can even be 60%, 70%, 80% and 90%. And also, they devote themselves fully to those things.

Therefore, we can say, OCD patients and healthy people are contrary to each other, the former think a lot and do little, while the latter think little and do a lot. So OCD is not actually hard to be cured, just that you should think less and do more, like healthy people.

To give up treatment

Morita therapy is a treatment of giving up. The meaning is that you only need to utterly give up your treatment, your OCD can then be cured. This is very right, we can say, it is one of the quintessences of the therapy. So, a lot of patients followed that advice and gave up their treatment, allowing obsessions to happen when they come, allowing themselves to indulge in the symptoms. The result is that they not only failed to heal themselves, on the contrary, they get more and more obsessed. This is because they generalized the phrase 'give up'. They did not understand(抱起半边就走) the true meaning of it. The phrase was understood just literally, they did not consider how to give up is the right way of giving up.

Actually, if you want to give up in the right way, the pre-condition is that the symptoms have to be accepted. You have to admit that symptoms are part of you, and you have to accept that your present moment is a normal condition already. Why? Because only by that can you totally accept your symptoms, treating them as a part of your body. That in turn can allow you to be less sensitive on those symptoms. As such you focus more easily on those objective stuffs that you should do in the reality. For instance, who will be confused because of the presence of two hands of one's own body? That is because everyone has two hands, this is normal, so you will not care about it. Hence, only by accepting the symptoms which are normal can you really give up the treatment of those symptoms. By giving up treatment, the real benefits of the treatment can be obtained. This is what we call by 'the action of non-action'(this is an idea of an ancient philosopher called Laozi 老子). From another point of view, giving up treatment is in fact to forget about OCD, it is a way of being insensitive to those symptoms. When symptoms have been forgotten, you will focus on what you should do, being able to 'do what you should do' and 'let nature take its course'.

And if you have not accepted your symptoms, then symptoms is to you foreign matters in your body. In our body, what we do to foreign matters is to repulse them. So, with the precondition of having the repulsion, do you believe that to 'give up' is really to 'giving up'? With this precondition, to give up is actually a form of suppression. It is to pay attention to the symptoms from another angle.

Traps other than the symptoms

Quite a few of my OCD patients have asked me a question: They have correctly understood the theories of Morita Therapy, but why is their OCD not able to be rooted out, with symptoms arising from time to time? What I would like to mention about this point is, even though you have understood correctly those theories, and you have put them into practise, you have not observed

those traps other than the symptoms. Therefore, no matter how far you have walked, you will be pulled back by those traps and return to those symptoms.

What are those traps other than the symptoms then? There are two trap, one is the so-called 'rationality' and the second one is indulgence.

We know that OCD patients are in fact very smart, with strong ability of thinking, and very rational. But their rationality and perfectionism fuse together, that is why they try to clarify matters without answers. Initially, after having treatment, those patients have practised 'let nature take its course' and 'do what they should do' quite well, and those symptoms have been relieved. But at this crucial moment, the rationality of OCD patients starts to revive. When they are calm or when nothing is going wrong, they sometimes think and believe that some of those obsessive thoughts in the past actually make sense.

Here I will give an example: One of a patient's obsessive thought is the fear that the chandelier in his room may fall down. He will think, 'it was really meaningless to think too much, but to think carefully, nothing can be 100% firm and secure. There is still a possibility that the chandelier may fall down, just that the probability is rather low.' At this moment, he may be aware that he is close to having compulsion, so he stops thinking about the chandelier. However, his rational mind will warn him again, 'it is correct that there are no things that are 100% firm and secure.' Then he will have a thought that tells him that he must think about it, and that not to think about it is, contrary to the fact, not right. Hence, the symptom is revived.

For the so-called 'indulgence', I also call it 'asking for troubles'. Sometimes OCD patients have their symptoms relieved, so they are particularly happy. Then they may flaunt their recovery, thinking about those obsessive thoughts in the past on purpose, as if they want to tell those symptoms that they have got rid of them. In fact, what they were doing was very dangerous, it is easy to create symptoms once again when they flaunt.

Therefore, in the process of treating OCD, we have to be aware of these two traps. Regarding the concrete way of resolving the trap of rationality, we should not think about anything that is somewhat related to obsessions, no matter how rational and right our thoughts are. Instead, we should do what we should do. Even when one feels that it is wrong not to think about those 'rational thoughts', and one must think about them, do not do that, as this is the trap that tries to seduce you. Once you have held on, your OCD will recover. If you do not hold on, you will plunge into symptoms again. In regard to the trap of indulgence mentioned above, the concrete way to solve the indulgence is also quite easy, which is not to indulge, but to let your happy mind be concentrated on stuff you need to do.

The meaning of recovery

The greatest hope of OCD patients is their recovery. But what is the real meaning of recovery?

If you think that it is the total elimination of symptoms, then I am sure that you will have obsessions forever, because that is not how real recovery is like.

We know that the underlying reason for OCD patients to have obsessions is because they defy nature. They see normal problems as abnormal, so that they obsess. For instance, when a man is walking on the street, he saw a beautiful girl, and then a thought to have intimate relationship with her arises in his mind. This is actually a very normal psychological response, and every male who is physically normal may have such thoughts. But OCD patients are different from others. They think that their thought is immoral and filthy, so they try to suppress this thought. So they get OCD.

Another example is that when a man is talking with others, he is always thinking how to respond to their questions, but he believes that these thoughts are abnormal. And what is the reality? The reality is that when we chat with others, we are constantly thinking about how to respond to others' questions. It is just that normal people are thinking subconsciously, and the reason why people think subconsciously is because it is like our breathings. It is a natural process and happens naturally, so we do not need to control voluntarily. But OCD patients deliberately think about the thoughts of the subconscious mind, treating them as abnormal. In the light of this, it would be a wonder if they do not have obsessions.

Therefore, those that OCD patients regard as symptoms are in fact very normal things that happen to us all. They are just like eating, sleeping and breathing, how can you eliminate them? I believe a person cannot if only he is alive.

So, a real recovery is not to eliminate those symptoms, but to accept that they are normal. Let things that are originally normal to be normal again, and then you will not repulse or pay attention to them. Then you will have calmness, and will focus your energy on what you should do. The so-called symptoms will disappear in the process of doing things. This is recovery.

The awareness of symptoms

Other than the fact that the symptoms are persistent, there is another reason for making symptoms hard to disappear: OCD patients are lack of awareness of symptom, always treating those thoughts and things that are worrying as things that are really going to happen. The result is definitely plunging into obsessive thoughts.

In fact, if we can be aware of the symptoms, then we can face and cast off those symptoms really well. To be aware of the symptoms means that when an uneasy thought is keeping on affecting us, we have to know that what make us feel uneasy is not the content of those thoughts. It is actually the symptoms, which is the thoughts themselves that is affecting us, making us feel uneasy.

For instance, one sees someone burning ritual money (paper money burnt for the Gods or the dead) when one is walking on the street. When he has returned home, he starts to worry about whether his clothes have been stained by those burnt ashes of the paper money. Therefore, he thinks if his

own clothes have really been stained time and again. The reason for that is because he is not aware of the symptoms, believing that the content of his worries is real.

It is quite easy to be aware of the symptoms. When he has thought for ten or even twenty times with worries and anxiety, but still to no avail, he should be mindful that it is not the problems themselves that are affecting him, but the symptoms of OCD. At this time, what he needs to do is to stop thinking about them right away. He should accept the uneasiness and worries that are present after he stops thinking, and try his best to do what he should do, integrating himself into his daily work and other affairs.

The clearing up of the willpower of Morita Therapy

The nature of obsessions is actually the process that OCD patients use their almighty willpower to repeatedly suppress and repel their thoughts that are uneasy.

Mr. Morita believes that, if one wants to break away from obsessions, the best way is to 'let nature take its course' and 'do what one should do'. That means you have to accept the presence of those symptoms, not to care about it, and do what you should do. Then the symptoms will disappear in the process of working and doing things.

After knowing about Morita Therapy, a lot of patients understand that the symptoms are brought forth by suppressing thoughts with willpower. However, at the same time, as they think that to 'do what they should do' in Morita therapy also requires willpower to put them into practice, they are worried that the willpower of Morita therapy will bring about their obsessions again. Therefore, they are fearful of Morita therapy, and this may even lead to the failure of their treatments.

In fact, their doubt about Morita Therapy itself is a kind of symptom of obsession. It is an obsession about the theories of Morita Therapy. The way to break away from this is just the same as that of other obsessions, which is to 'let nature take its course' and 'do what we should do'. I will not elaborate on them again here.

But here I would like to mention something related to willpower. There is really the usage of willpower in Morita Therapy, but it is used on putting the therapy into practice and taking actions. That means we have to use our willpower to try hard to work on things in your life and do what you should do. Very often, OCD patients use their emotions as the criteria of their life. For example, when they are in bad mood, they do not want to eat, do not want to work, so on and so forth. At such times, if you really do not eat or work, then you are not 'doing what you should do', and that will be hard to break away from obsessions. Therefore, at such times, you have to use your supreme willpower to allow yourself to eat, to work, and to do what you should do, integrating yourself into your daily life. Only in this way can you get rid of the lifestyle of using emotions as a criterion.

To sum up, the difference between the willpower of OCD and that of the Morita Therapy is that

the former is using our willpower to struggle against our own thoughts, and the latter one is on trying hard to do what we should do. The two usages of willpower are different. You should make them clear, so as to prevent yourself from being troubled by that.

Surely, trying hard to live using willpower, and ‘let nature takes its course’ is not contradictory. Nor are willpowers suppressing the nature, actually they are compatible with each other. To be simple, the good willpower is to live together with your symptoms. It is an attitude that: even though we are in bad mood, we have to continue to live and do what we should do.

Matters concerning ‘accept things that are normal’ and ‘not to think of the symptoms’

I have always encountered some patients who ask me, ‘in books about Morita Therapy, they said our symptoms are normal. So as the symptoms are normal, why can’t we think about them?’

Here I will write down the answer, so as to let more people to get rid of their doubts. In fact, the normality of symptoms as told by Mr. Morita is referring to the phenomenon of having distracting thoughts. It is referring to the phenomenon, but not the content of those distracting thoughts.

The reason why distracting thought is called distracting thought, is because its content is absurd, meaningless, filthy, horrible, etc. Therefore, if you think and pay attention to the content of the distracting thought, you will plunge into an endless vicious cycle. As time goes by, obsession will be formed.

And the reason why we have no need to pay attention to distracting thought is because it has its own mechanism of appearance and disappearance. There is no need for us to control it consciously. It is just like our breathings, we naturally breathe in, and we naturally breathe out. Distracting thoughts appear naturally, and will disappear naturally.

If you want to control it deliberately, you will defy the law of nature, and you are asking for trouble. So, to face your symptom, we do not need to control or manage it deliberately, we just do what we should do. This way, it will return to its natural pattern: naturally appear, naturally disappear, and finally, you are not aware of it actually.

Keep walking and don’t be halted by sufferings and pains

In our life, the amount of sufferings is imponderable.

Surely, subjectively, we want ourselves to be happy forever, without any pain. Although it is a good desire, it is somewhat distant from the reality. Sometimes, the more you strive for happiness, the more you are having excruciating pain. That is because it is not possible in our life to be happy everyday, just like we cannot be suffering everyday. ‘One has sorrow and joy, and will part or meet each other again; the moon is bright or dim, and she may wax or wane’ (similar to ‘every flow must

have its ebb'), this writing of Su Shi (a famous Chinese poet, writer, and official in the 11th century) is the most objective description of life. Therefore, to really obtain the happiness of your life, you have to face the reality: Life is a compound of sufferings and happiness. If you can accept this reality, then we can say, pain is further away from you. Surely, this step is not enough, as even though you accept sufferings, it does not mean sufferings will leave you alone.

The sun rises and falls, wind and clouds keep moving, the second hand of a clock keeps on jumping, just as the beatings of our hearts. They are all explaining the pattern of the world, which is every seconds are changing and moving in this world.

The mother nature is our best teacher. If you want your pains to leave, you have to learn from her, respect and revere the pattern of nature: Not to be halted by sufferings.

Here I have to share with you a short story in Buddhism. Once upon a time, there are two monks-a master and a pupil, going to cross a river. When they have reached the shore, they see that a woman also wants to cross the river. However, the river is waist-deep and its current is rather rapid. Therefore, the woman is in a dilemma. The master does speak a word, and carried the woman across the river. When they have reached the other side of the river, the master put the woman down, and continued his journey with his pupil. But after quite a while, the pupil is still feeling uneasy. He tells his master that there should be propriety between male and female, he should not have carried the woman across the river. But the master replies, 'I have put her down after I have crossed the river, you have not put down (the worrying thought) yet?' The pupil is enlightened.

The moral of the story is about 'put down'. But what I want to say is that, the reason why the pupil cannot put down, worrying and uneasy, is because he defied the pattern of nature, everything is changing and in motion constantly. The pupil halted his mind for that issue about the woman, stopped at that past moment, forgetting what he should be doing at the present moment. That is why he cannot put down.

Actually, we can all think carefully: Why can't we walk out of our sufferings for such a long time? It is sufferings themselves that do not want to leave us, or we are stopping ourselves from going forward because of the sufferings, forgetting what we should do and allowing pains to live on?

In facing sufferings, the response of many of us is: I am in a bad mood, I don't want to work on anything, I don't want to study, I don't want to communicate with others, or even don't want to eat. We only sit and daydream, in a wonderful phrase, it is to think for methods to solve the problem. In fact, this action is an indulgence, an indulgence in sufferings.

For example, one has just gone through a breakup. She devotes all her time onto the pains of her breakup, she does not work, nor does she play or chat. Not only does she fail to walk out of her breakup, worse still, she also gets depression.

Another example is one of our OCD patients. For a random thought he comes across, he devotes all his energy on paying attention to and suppressing this thought. He also does not work or study, he does not do what he should do, the result must be entering a dead end.

Yes, worries and pains are really bad, but if we do nothing and just pay attention to worries and pains, this is stopping our motion, stopping ourselves from advancing. The nature of constant motion is defied. This is an indulgence in the abyss of misery, unable to extricate ourselves.

Therefore, the meaning of not to be halted by pains is no matter we are worrying or suffering, things that have to be done have to be done anyway. That is, even though we are suffering and worrying, we have to do what we should do. This way, we are revering and respecting the pattern of nature, not being halted by sufferings. Sufferings will vanish without notice in our advancing footsteps.

What 'symptoms' are and matters about distinguishing symptoms

When OCD patients are incapable of escaping from obsessions for a long time, they will become extremely sensitive. Once they face worries in their daily life, especially when they get stuck in thoughts or confusions, they will link them to symptoms of OCD. They are worrying constantly and are alert of the arrival of the symptoms, as if a soldier sees every bush and tree as an enemy soldier in an extreme state of nervousness. And after receiving the treatments, they are always worrying a problem, which is they cannot distinguish symptoms from those that are not. Just as I have mentioned before, just when they are in bad mood or in confusion, they will conclude they are having symptoms.

In fact, no matter if he is an OCD patient or a normal healthy person, a person faces a lot of problems in his life. He will be troubled and worried. This is perfectly normal. Therefore, we should first understand a point which is that we should not relate anything to the symptoms.

So what is symptom of OCD actually? For example, when an OCD patient was passing by a room, he saw that a table is a bit dirty, and he wanted to clean it. However, suddenly, he resisted his want to clean it, as he believed that to clean it is an OCD symptom. So he repeatedly thought if he should clear it or not.

He told his confusion to me, and I asked him, 'if you go and clean it?' He replied that if he had gone to clean it, he would not have thought about that problem again, and he would not have cleaned it repeatedly. He would be doing what he should be doing. Then I asked him, 'then why didn't you clean it?' He explained that he was worried that the action of cleaning was an OCD symptom. I told him, 'actually, you can clean the table, and you can choose not to clean it, both of them are not the symptoms. Cleaning it means that you are a careful person, and not cleaning it just means you are a less sensitive person. Actually, your worries and the repeated thought of whether to clean it or not is the real symptom. And it is a symptom only if you repeatedly clean the table after you have cleaned it once.'

To be frank, everything in our life is not symptom. Everything occurs naturally. Symptoms are created from our subjective mind. Your heart moved, and then symptoms arise. If you do not

move or when your heart moved but you do not care about it, letting bygones be bygones, you will continue doing what you should do.

Now, a lot of OCD patients will raise a question, which is, should we try to distinguish symptoms from those that are not? How can we distinguish? Is it to carefully obtain a standard answer, preparing to compare using it constantly? A lot of OCD patients share these same questions. But I want to say, if you distinguish them, then you are wrong. That is because your mind is still thinking about symptoms in such case. Besides, every one of us has so many thoughts coming out of our minds after we have encountered some matters. If you try to distinguish each one of those thoughts, either you will be tired to death, or you will plunge into the vicious cycle of obsessions. Moreover, sometimes, this behaviour will become a kind of obsession.

So what should we do? The only thing we should do is no matter we are having normal problems or symptoms, we have no need to care about them. There is no need to consider if we should distinguish or not, we just need to do what we should do, that is all. That is because, for normal problems, they can only be solved by taking actions, they cannot be solved by thinking. Nor can symptoms be solved by thinking. Remember, if you are still continuing to do things that you should do, and not stay at a place dumbly, repeatedly thinking, repeatedly worrying, and repeatedly repeating your actions, then nothing is a symptom. Even if it is a symptom, it will disappear when you are doing what you should be doing.

Don't be impatient

OCD patients are generally rather impatient. They want their symptoms to be eliminated and becoming healthy at once. This feeling is understandable, because OCD is extremely excruciating, we can say, it is more painful than to die. But what I want to say is, this impatience is always a great stumbling block for people who want to walk out of OCD. A lot of patients stopped their treatment because they think that the treatment is useless. This is caused by impatience.

As one says, 'if you are impatient, you are not able to eat a hot tofu' (as it can absorb a lot of heat, requiring a long time to drop its temperature). Treating OCD is a relatively long process, and a lot of confusion and difficulties will arise, for example, the misunderstanding of the theories of Morita Therapy, the repeating appearance of symptoms, etc. In fact, this is very normal. Recovery is achieved in the process of correcting misunderstandings and experiencing repeating symptoms.

A lot of OCD patients are reading books about Morita Therapy, believing that to accept symptoms makes sense, and is beneficial to them. But what they are worrying is: I have accepted symptoms, although I am improving, why can't I walk out of them totally?

Now, I will ask him, 'have you really accepted your symptoms? If you have accepted them, then why are you still so impatient?'

Actually, impatience has two meanings:

The first one is the manifestation of perfectionism, which is to hope that all problems can be solved in a blink of an eye. But, is it possible that all problems can really be solved in a blink of an eye? If it is possible, then why are you still having OCD for so many years?

The second one is still the unacceptance of symptoms. Because being impatient implies that you want to eliminate symptoms quickly, and why are you so eager to eliminate them quickly? Because you are actually still treating symptoms as foreign matters, you are not genuinely accepting symptoms. This is why you cannot recover yet.

Therefore, please do not be impatient in the process of your treatment!

Push yourself

A lot of patients say that when they are having those symptoms, they find it hard to move out of it. That means, even though they have found themselves having obsessions, they feel they have got stuck.

Then I will tell them, ‘Then what you can do is only to push yourself, letting yourself to take actions, and do what you should do.’ They will reply, ‘I know that, but I feel that I seem to have no such power, and no such ability!’ Then I will reply, ‘do you really have no such power and ability? If it is so, you will not have got obsessions, as once symptoms arise, you would not have cared about them, and that fit in with the pattern of nature. In fact, it is not that you have no such power, but you used the power in the wrong place. You have been keeping on suppressing and controlling symptoms, and that can prove that you have strong willpower and strength. Who can work on a matter for a few years or even more than ten years? But you have made it. So how can you say you have no such power and ability? You are just using your power in the wrong place.’

Therefore, it is not that hard to walk out of your obsessions. You just need to consume half or even less of your power in fighting against symptoms to push yourself to take actions right away, doing what you should be doing. Then, you will walk out of your symptoms. And your power will therefore be used on the right spot.

The principle of stopping oneself from being hungry

A lot of patients fail to walk out of OCD after quite a while. Sometimes, it is not because they misunderstand or misinterpret the meaning of Morita’s theories, but that they put too much emphasis on theories and overlooked the need to put them into practice. Therefore, we can always see that some patients can speak fluently, and even very thoroughly, about those theories. But they still fail to free themselves from their symptoms, plunging into them.

In the process of treatment, it is of paramount importance to understand correctly the theories,

because it determines if the direction of the treatment is right or not. However, only knowing about the theories is not enough, because to get out of OCD, the only way is by taking actions, taking actions and taking actions again.

In fact, this is just like when we are hungry, we all know only by eating can hunger cease to exist, what about just keeping on saying, 'only by eating can we be not hungry,' can we be not hungry? Of course not. To be not hungry, the only way is to take action, and get something to eat.

So, to get out of obsessions, it is just like we have to eat to be not hungry, we have to take actions, take actions and take actions again.

Why has Morita Therapy intensified symptoms?

Some patients have such an experience, which is that after they have put the Morita Therapy into practice, their symptoms intensified. Obsessive thoughts increased in amount or they become more uneasy and worrying than before, some of them also have some slight physiological adverse reactions.

At such times, if they have not got systematic treatment from psychologists, because of not understanding the matter, they will be at a complete loss easily, not knowing why it happens. They will feel scared. Once they are scared, this will lead them to do the opposite of what Morita Therapy tells them to do. They will pay more attention on their symptoms, but the more they do that, they pay more attentions to them and get more worried. At such times, they started to doubt and negate the effectiveness of Morita Therapy. They start to think that Morita Therapy is incapable of helping them, and then, because they have such doubt to Morita Therapy, their treatment may fail.

In fact, I want to tell you guys that in the beginning of receiving Morita Therapy, it is very normal to have your symptoms intensified. That is because OCD symptoms are in fact a kind of vicious habit. When we stop our habits, our habits tend to bounce back, causing the presence of intensified symptoms. However, the length of time when the worsening of symptoms happen is limited, it varies from person to person, and varies from a few hours to a few days.

In fact, walking out of the symptoms is quite similar to giving up smoking. A lot of friends who give up smoking have a similar experience. When they start to give up smoking, they will feel extremely uncomfortable initially. This is actually the bounce back of habits. A lot of people fail to give up smoking totally because they cannot accept the discomfort. Another reason for that is because they are afraid this discomfort will persist. And in fact, you only need to hold on, and continue doing what you should do, not to think or care about your discomfort, not long, such discomfort will disappear naturally.

Therefore, OCD patients need not to be scared by the intensification of symptoms in the beginning of your treatment. And you actually have no need of worrying, you just need to persist in doing

what you should do, and that is ok. The symptoms will be reduced with your persistence.

Thinking is no better than taking action

One says, ‘thinking is no better than taking action’, this is a very meaningful saying, using it in explaining and treating OCD can also bear excellent result.

In fact, when the problems that we name them as ‘symptoms’ have not yet developed to symptoms, everything is normal and natural. But why are symptoms developed finally? There is only one reason-because you start to think. You dogmatically realized and think, ‘why am I like this, I should not be like this, this is abnormal.’ And then you will suppress or pay attention for a long while those that you believe are abnormal, but you do not know that this is the beginning of your symptoms. In fact, if we do not think (definitely, normal people like us find it hard not to think), or if we have thought about those problems, but not to be stopped from doing what we should do by worries and confusions, taking actions, then the bygoners will be bygoners. In this case, we will not be getting what is called the OCD.

This is as though a man walking at night. When he is walking into a dark street, he starts to be scared if he will bump into a ghost. So he starts to feel very nervous. Actually, this kind of thought and emotion is absolutely normal. Every single person who encounters such situation may have such thought. But our OCD patients, on the contrary, think that they should not have such thoughts and worrying feelings, believing these are signs of their cowardice. As such they suppress their thoughts and feelings. Therefore, after they have walked out of the dark street, they will still wonder why they have been so scared, and ferociously repulsing their behaviour and emotions that have happened before. OCD symptoms are created in their non-stop thinking as a result.

The reality is, if we walk pass the dark street, then our nervousness will be reduced gradually. We just need to take actions, continue doing what we should do, leaving the past in the past, and nothing will happen. Therefore, thinking is no better than taking action.

Regarding those friends who have plunged into symptoms, a major reason why they have not yet escaped from them is that they are still thinking. After symptoms have emerged, they habitually put all their attentions on their thoughts, trying to clarify the symptoms. However, if symptoms can be clarified, then there will not be OCD in this world. Regarding the treatment of Morita Therapy, they are thinking as always, believing ‘let nature take its course’ and ‘do what you should’ can be realized with thoughts. They think that by understanding ideas of Morita Therapy in their heart can OCD be cure. The fact is, no matter how deep you have understood Morita Therapy in your heart, it is to no avail, because the essence of Morita Therapy is to put it into practise, and not to understand it in your heart. You take action, and you are already ‘letting nature take its course’ and ‘doing what you should’, and you will experience the essence of Morita Therapy. So, thinking is no better than taking action!

The 'inactive' way of treating anxiety

Actually, the most painful thing caused by OCD is the restless and uneasy feeling. And if OCD does not bring you that feeling, we can try to imagine: is our pain reduced by more than a half?

To defeat OCD, overcoming the anxious, restless and uneasy feelings is very crucial. What the 'let nature take its course' and 'do what you should do' in Morita Therapy mean is that, when anxiety comes, we do not care about it, doing what we should be doing, then the anxiety feeling will disappear in the process. The idea is very simple, but when being put into practice, OCD patients always find themselves in great difficulty, being bogged down. This is caused by two main factors: one is patients do not understand why by not caring their anxiety, anxiety will vanish naturally; The second one is believing that your anxiety feeling is having a great impact to you, and will make you do badly in things. Below, I will elaborate the two points to eliminate your confusions.

Firstly, why will your anxiety vanish naturally by not caring about it? There are two reasons behind it. First one is that the pattern of our emotions is a process of beginning-climax-disappearance, and it is a natural process. It does not require our deliberate control. Anxiety comes, and then it will disappear naturally, just like sunrise and sunset. If you do not accept anxiety, wanting to suppress your anxiety at once, this is against the pattern of nature. Therefore, not only will you be unable to let anxiety disappear, on the contrary, your anxiety feeling will intensify. That is because you are fighting against the nature, just like someone who only wants a sunny daytime, but does not want a night-time, that person is for sure asking for trouble. In the final analysis, the reason why OCD patients are so anxious is not that anxiousness does not want to leave you alone, but that you are holding anxiousness very tightly. So, if you let go of it, not to care about it, doing what you should be doing, then anxiety feeling will naturally finish its journey, and disappear like flowing water.

The second reason is that things always reverse themselves after reaching an extreme. So as to say, when something reaches its climax, passing through a certain boundary, it will move in the opposite direction. This principle roots from the philosophy of Laozi and Zhuangzi of my country, the experiences of thousands of years has proved it to be totally correct. Einstein's Theory of Relativity states that when our speed has reached that of the apex of light, time will be reversed. Their principles are the same. Therefore, when anxiousness comes, we do not need to care about it, when it has reached the apex, it will decline and disappear. From another point of view, anxiousness is the release of the energy of the pent-up emotions in your heart. You do not care about it, and it will be released freely and utterly, after the release, anxiousness will naturally disappear. Contrarily, if you presumptuously try to control it, you are blocking its release, the result is being anxious continuously. Therefore, when facing anxiousness, we do not need to care about it, carry with you your anxiousness and go on doing what you should do. Anxiousness will disappear

naturally in the process of doing stuff.

Secondly, in the process of the implementation of Morita Therapy, anxiousness will not disappear at once. The time for its disappearance varies from person to person, from a few hours to a few days, and it may repeat itself after a certain period of time. In this process, a lot of patients will tell me, ‘anxiousness is excruciating, it makes me to do badly in everything!’ Then I will reply, ‘who said we cannot do things when we are anxious? This is your self-limitation, and is a wrong concept.’ Scientific analysis proves that, a proper amount of anxiousness can make the brain excited, making us to be concentrated, and that makes us do better in matters. You were doing badly in everything because you paid all your attentions on repulsing anxiousness. Therefore, you were not paying attention on doing your stuff, and you surely would do badly in everything.’ Then, they will say that they are afraid their anxiousness will have bad consequences on them, and I will answer, ‘regarding this point, you have more say than me. You have got OCD for so many years, and have been anxious for so many years. Don’t you know what will happen after your anxiousness?’ Their answer is that anxiousness comes after anxiousness repeatedly.

It is true that anxiousness comes after anxiousness repeatedly. As such, I want to tell my dear patients: If the result of your fear is at the most, anxiousness, and you have experienced anxiousness for so many years, what do you have to be afraid of? Abandon your control over your anxiety utterly, and do what you should do. In this way, your anxiety will disappear, even if it really does not disappear, the consequence will just be another anxious feeling. However, if you persist in not caring about it, it will definitely disappear. This is just a matter of time.

The ‘action’ taken to treat anxiousness

As Morita Therapy roots from the philosophy of Laozi and Zhuangzi, using Morita Therapy to treat anxiousness is a kind of ‘action by inaction’. But everything has its duality, if there is an inactive way, then there is also an ‘active’ way of treating OCD. If we fuse the inactive and active ways, it is much more beneficial in walking out of anxiousness.

In the past, a popular method of Behavior Therapy is the relaxation technique. It can be divided mainly into two parts: the first one is the relaxation technique of muscles, and the other one is the meditational way. I will not discuss them here, there are other places where you can find more about their information. What I want to say, is that when OCD patients are receiving Morita Therapy, they can spend half an hour on the relaxation technique. With persistence, you will be calmer after a month. Even when you still have symptoms, your level of anxiousness will decrease a lot.

Here, I will introduce a method which is developed from my experiences of carry out treatments. I call it ‘emotional energy conversion method’.

I have mentioned that anxiousness is in fact a release of a kind of energy from our heart. Not to control our anxiousness as told in Morita Therapy is in fact to allow this kind of energy to be released without hindrance, and finally anxiousness disappears. But it is in fact a kind of energy, letting it disappear naturally is sort of a pity. In fact, we can make use of this energy, transforming it to the energy that we need. For instance, this energy behind anxiousness is like nuclear power, which can be made to make nuclear bomb, destroying mankind. But at the same time, it can also be used in generating electricity, benefiting mankind, so it depends on how the user uses it.

The specific method of converting emotional energy is easy: When you are feeling extremely anxious, please clench your fist tightly, and give a hint to yourself loudly in your heart, ‘my whole body is full of endless power, I am extremely confident!’ You should repeat it a number of times, and you have to attentively feel the powerful feeling. By and large, with just 1 to 3 minutes, you will feel that your anxiousness is reduced, and you feel that you are full of vigor. This indicates that the energy is transformed. At that moment, what you need to do is to follow Morita’s theories, do not care about your emotions, and do what you should do at once.

Now, some people may perhaps think, ‘is this method defying Morita’s Therapy?’ But what I want to say is, everything here on earth is natural, they do not defy each other. It is just like we have male and female, sun and moon, fire and water, they look like they are antagonistic to each other, but they are harmonious and united in nature. You have no need to be persistent and constrained by that. It is your persistence and obstinateness that is defying the nature. Surely, we are not fighting against anxiousness, and we are not suppressing it, but utilizing it. It is merely to transform its power so that it can be released from another channel.

The Buddha said, ‘Dharma is not Dharma’

The Buddha said, ‘**Dharma** (Dharma means the teachings of Buddha) is not Dharma’. He wanted to tell his disciples not to adhere and cling to superficial and tangible things as words, or else they cannot meet with the **dharma** (being a great person-being morally upright, with appropriate behaviour, etc.), or even be controlled by the ‘devil’. We face the same problem in treating OCD with Morita Therapy.

For example, some friends with OCD have great result after their Morita treatment at the beginning. However, as they ‘studied’ more deeply about Morita Therapy, their results get worse and worse, some are even scared by words like ‘let nature take its course’ and ‘do what we should do’. The reason behind that is easy to explain.

At first, the therapy is effective, because they followed the instructions of it. They do what they should do. The therapy is ineffective at the end, because they stop taking actions, and just investigate deeply the ideas of the therapy in their mind. We know that the essence of the Morita Therapy is to put its teachings into practice and take actions, from that can the real insight and

knowledge be acquired. Deep thinking is unable to allow us to acquire real knowledge and understanding about the therapy. Therefore, what they do at the end is to put the cart before the horse.

For instance, some patients regard the Morita Therapy as the only standard. They reject the useful parts of other therapies, believing that Morita Therapy and other therapies are repellent to each other. I had met a patient whose OCD symptom was constantly thinking about this problem. This is the typical way of asking for trouble and adhering. It was totally wrong. He forgot that the reason why the land and the earth (the universe) is called the mother of all things (mother nature), is because it can contain everything. Just like the sea that can accept even the smallest river to enter, it is modest and open-minded. Actually everything can be integrated and is harmonious. It is merely the thought of your mind that is not harmonious.

Another example was that, a patient knew that conflict in his mind was the cause of OCD, so he stopped repulsing his thoughts. Not long, his symptoms were reduced, but he moaned that his interpersonal relationship had deteriorated. I ask him why. He replied that at that time, when he had some negative opinion about others, he would not suppress himself, but voiced them out right away remorselessly. I asked him, 'if you have an idea of hitting someone, will you also take action right away?' He considered for a while, and said, 'yes.' I replied, 'if you really do that, the result may be that you will be hit hard by the other person.' He was adhering and clinging to the superficial meanings of Morita Therapy. That was why he was so reckless. Even though he had stopped repulsing his thoughts, not having obsessions, his attention was concentrated on his thoughts from the beginning to the end. Therefore, he was still overpowered by all those thoughts in his mind. That was just like merely jumping from one abyss to another one. Therefore, to really walk out of obsessions, not only do we need to stop our conflicts and repulsions within our heart, but also to pay attentions to our daily lives and our works wholly, and try your best to get things done the best way it can. In this way, you will naturally know what should be done and what should not, which way of doing things is beneficial to you, and which is not.

The Buddha had preached for 49 years, and at the end, he said he had not preached anything. Here, I lend his words to tell those who are adhering and clinging to Morita Therapy: Morita Therapy is not Morita Therapy, Mr. Morita had not taught anything, so just do what you should do!

Symptoms are definitely conflicts, but conflicts are not necessarily symptoms

Mr. Morita has informed us that the cause of OCD is 'mental repulsion', which is the repulsion and conflict of one's own thoughts. For some OCD patients, after then have understood this point, they followed the idea, and do not try to repel their thoughts. However, they may fall into another mistake, which is treating every conflict they encounter in their life as symptom. They may as a result repulse the normal pain and confusions they face in their life, making their recovery coming to

a halt.

In our life, every one of us faces a lot of confusions, troubles, and pains. This is very normal, and is unavoidable in our life. And these confusions and pains are caused by our conflicts in our mind. For example, someone has to make a decision about his work. But because there are a few proposals he can choose from, he was hesitant and faces a dilemma. At one time he finds a certain proposal good, another time he finds another proposal good. Therefore, he feels annoyed and anxious. The cause of the dilemma and hesitance is that he has to choose between the proposals and consider and compare their pros and cons.

Another example is the re-examination of a girl's own love affair: 'should I breakup with my lover, or to continue our relationship?' Again, she is hesitant, unable to make a decision, experiencing great pain. And this pain of her is also caused by the consideration and comparison of the pros and cons of the two decisions.

Although the above two mental states are just like OCD-caused by conflicts in one's mind, and are possible to last quite a while together with anxiousness and pain, but are the two conflicts equivalent to OCD? Definitely not, so what are the two conflicts? The answer is: The former is merely pressure or a worry about work, and the latter is just a worry about love.

However, for our OCD patients, because 'once one has been bitten by a snake, one is afraid of a rope eternally' (burnt child dreads the fire). Once they face similar conflicts in their mind, they will unwittingly believe that they have plunged into obsessions, and so anxiousness feeling arise. In another word, those that are not OCD symptoms become symptoms because patients believe they are. Although they can temporarily do their own work and not to care about the conflicts, escaping from the anxiousness, they may fall into two situations as they do not understand the underlying problem. The first one is that they feel that they cannot integrate themselves into their daily life and work. The second one is that they will have an expected anxiousness. They were afraid that those conflicts in their life may bring them back to obsessions. At such moment, if these two questions are not properly treated, then not only their recovery will come to a halt, but they may even plunge into the abyss of obsessions because of expected anxiousness and worries about their symptoms.

In reality, the reason for the two questions is very simple. Our patients have mixed up the conflicts of their daily life with their obsessions. They have treated their worries and pains we normally face as the symptoms.

Now that we have now made things clear, so how can we treat the problems we encounter? The first thing you need to do is to realize that we have worries in our life. Like happiness, worries are constituent elements of our life. The second thing is that we do not need to distinguish normal conflicts from conflicts of our symptoms. As I have mentioned in "What 'symptoms' are and matters about distinguishing symptoms", if you try to distinguish, you are wrong. That is because distinguishing indicates that you are constantly paying attention to your symptoms. This will forbid you to recover completely. In treatments, I have always told my OCD friends these words, 'actually everything is natural, so do not link everything to symptoms. Things that have past have past. If

you are still doing what you should do, continue to live, then nothing is symptom. Even if we have symptoms, they will disappear when you are doing what you should do. By that time, you will be able to have a completely free mind, and will naturally integrate yourself into your life and work deeply.

How to face the relapse of the symptoms

In the process of treatment, the relapse of symptoms is destined to happen, it is normal. So how can we face the relapse of symptoms?

First of all, you have to accept that the relapse of symptoms must happen, and is normal. It is only when you have accepted the relapse that you will not be terrified by it or think that you should not encounter it. That can prevent you from losing confidence in walking out of OCD because of the feeling of losing control.

Secondly, you have to have an attitude letting bygones be bygones, and continue to do stuff that you should do. In another word, when you realize that you have plunged into your symptoms, even though you may lack confidence and feel moody, but you do not need to feel guilty. You also do not need to think about why the symptoms reappear, how you can get rid of symptoms faster, or worry about whether you will plunge into symptoms again. The more you think about such problems, the more you are subconsciously paying attention and repulsing your symptoms. This shows that you have not 'let nature take its course', but falling more deeply into the abyss of OCD. Therefore, to treat these, you do not need to care about anything, just do what you should do is fine. The problem of the relapse of symptoms will naturally be solved properly.

Abandon your subjectiveness, let the external fact be the only criteria

OCD patients have a big problem, which is that they are too subjective. They treat stuff of their imagination as something that is real. Therefore, they are asking for troubles, being anxious and deeply worried the whole day.

For example, a person had got a job, and he needed to have a physical checkup. Because the nurse asked him if he was too nervous after checking his heartbeat rate, he started to get worried. He worried if he was having any sickness and worried if he was able to pass through his body check. After he had passed the body check finally, he was still worrying. He wondered if the company for the physical checkup was only interested in making money and hence tried to hide his sickness.

Another example is that another person thought that the disabled bring people bad luck, so he was extremely scared of seeing disabled people for fear of getting being luck. Unfortunately, one of his neighbours was a disabled person. Therefore, he was anxious everyday, afraid that this

neighbour will bring him bad luck, and the reality? The reality is that he had worried about that for a few years, and yet he had not encountered any unlucky thing. Instead, it was his subjectiveness that made him feel scared of going outside of his home.

One more example was that a person was afraid he would sleepwalk after he had fallen asleep. Therefore, he was very afraid of sleeping, and once he slept, he started to worry for a long time. However, he did not sleepwalk-not even once.

Another example is a person who, bafflingly and for no reason, was afraid that he would get sick. For instance, he smelled the smell of his classmate sitting at his front. He felt that the smell would make him get sick. He even believed that he was going to get sick after he has eaten a bit more chillies. Similarly, he had worried for a few years, but the result of his hospital physical checkup showed that he had got no physiological sickness.

We can say that there are too many, too many worries for OCD patients. Here, I have to ask the aforementioned and other OCD patients, ‘for those matters that you are worrying, how many of them have really happened in your real life? Why do you only pay attention on your worrying thoughts, but not on the fact that nothing has happened? What that you are worrying have long been proved to be fake and illusionary! Facing the reality that is crystal clear, why do you treat your worrying imaginations as something real?’

This is just like a judge who has to sentence a person. Do you think he will do that because you say that he is guilty? No, the judge will ask you to give him proves. If you fail to do that, then the person is innocent, and you are falsely accusing him!

Therefore, from now on, please abandon your subjectiveness, do not treat anything in your imaginations as something real, and imaginations are not real either. You have to let the objective fact and reality to be your only criteria, or else you are an unbecoming judge!

To take actions is to live

‘To do what you should do’, or ‘to take actions’ is the core of Morita Therapy. The meaning is simple, but a lot of patients misinterpreted it one-sidedly as to work or do other stuff non-stop. So as to say, when their symptoms appear, they will keep doing stuff, for example sweeping the floor and cleaning to walk out of their symptoms. Although it is a bit effective, they can never recover. Worse still, if handled badly, this will form another kind of symptom of obsession.

Therefore, a correct understanding of ‘to do what you should do’ is very important. Then what is the real meaning of ‘to do what you should do’ or ‘to take action’? The answer is very simple, which is simply, to live. That means, no matter you are having the symptoms or not, you do not need to care, just do your work if you should do your work, learn if you should learn, socialize when you should to socialize, play when you should play, rest when you should rest, listen to music when you should listen to music, go window-shopping when you should go window-shopping, chat when

you should chat, etc. Live just like a normal person, and not to mechanically go to work or do stuff non-stop when symptoms come to you.

For example, someone is tired after a day's work. However, this time, his symptoms came, if he tries to walk out of his symptoms by sweeping or cleaning his room, then he is wrong. This is mechanical and clinging. Even though it can have some effect, its effectiveness is limited. What he should do is that, he is tired, so he can go have some entertainment, for example, to watch the television, listen to music, chatting with family members, or sing karaoke with friends, so as to relax himself. Or he can simply go to sleep. This is the real meaning of 'to do what you should do'.

Therefore, 'to do what you should do' = to take action = to live.

Symptoms start to feel 'scared'

In my previous article of 'Why has Morita Therapy intensified symptoms?', I have mentioned that the symptoms will intensify at the beginning of employing Morita Therapy. Which means, obsessive thoughts increase in number at a period of time, and the emotions that arise become gradually more and more worrying. And now, what I would also like to add is, such situation also happens in the middle period and the later stage of the treatment. It is just that the reason for that to happen is different from the beginning period of the treatment. At the beginning stage, it is a habitual response. In the middle stage and later stage, it is because symptoms start to be 'scared', as it is about to vanish, and you are going to recover.

Before accepting treatment, OCD patients are likely to fall into symptoms, because at that time, your thoughts are under absolute control of symptoms. When patients have received treatment, because they have learned the correct way of thinking and behavioural method, they are gradually nurturing a new and good habit to replace the previous symptomatic habit. Therefore, the symptomatic habit is unwilling to let that to happen. It is afraid that it would disappear, so what can it do? It can only increase its intensity to disrupt you, so as to make you go back to the symptomatic habit.

At such time, if we do not understand this phenomenon well enough, believing that it should not happen, believing that Morita Therapy is useless, or starting to focus on our own thoughts and emotions, then you are taken in by symptoms. There is an old saying: 'those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make (them) mad.' The same applies to symptoms. Before symptom is completely vanished, it will use its remaining force to go crazy and frenetic. But after the frenetic behaviour of the symptom comes its downfall. Therefore, when we are facing such situations, no matter how many times it happens, we do not need to care about anything about them. Do what we should do, live seriously, when symptoms have finished its madness, it will also die out. And you will not be far away from your total recovery.

You are the lord of your heart

The Buddha said, ‘all of Dharmadhatu comes from our mind’. Its meaning is that everything in this world is created by your heart, hence, he told us that if we want to get rid of pain, we have to tame our heart. I think, to tame our hearts, what we have to understand is that we are not slaves of our hearts, but lords of them.

When I am and at rest, I always think about what the cause of our OCD patients’ pains is. Surely, modern psychology contains a lot of researches on this, like genetic factors, experiences of one’s growth, personal characteristics, psychological trauma, the development and cognition about sex, etc. However, what I want to say here, is that we have forgotten an important factor which is above all else, and a summary of all factors. It is that we have become slaves of our heart.

That is true, you can really think: what the hell is your symptom? Is it that whenever you have any thoughts in your heart, you treat it as something real? You keep on thinking, keep on worrying, and are constantly beware of having any change in your heart. Isn’t the relationship between you and your heart the equivalent to that of a lord and a slave? Whatever the heart requires you to do, you must do it. You are humble and respectful to your heart, trembling with fear, and obedient. However, the more you are like this, the more the heart tries to torment you ceaselessly.

What about the truth? The truth is that you are not a slave of your heart, but a lord. The heart is your servant instead. That is because there is you before there is your heart, and your heart is not present before there is you. Therefore, I would like those friends who are being tormented and in great pain not to be so remorseful. You are just a lord who has lost your orientation. If only you return to your starting point, you can be a lord of your heart again.

Definitely, in the process of returning, it will not go smoothly all the way, the heart will try all it can to hinder you. Therefore, you have to grasp the correct way of life. Do not believe that you can use your absolute power to suppress your heart even though you are the lord of it. Just read the history, and you will know that every absolute monarch who suppress people with absolute power face a certain fate- an ever mightier resistance and struggle from the people. You suppressed too hard on your heart, that is why your symptoms are developed. You should learn from this lesson.

What is the correct way then? You have to understand the pattern of the motion and the characteristic of your heart. You should ‘let nature take its course’, be indifferent to the so-called obstacles, and do what you should and want to do wholeheartedly. Take actions to reach the happy life you aspire. In the process, you will naturally once again become the lord of your heart. The heart will also once again, serve wholeheartedly for a kind, benevolent and understanding lord like you.

Accept yourself, encourage yourself, and try hard to take action

No matter what one does, to be successful, one certainly has to encounter hardships and setbacks. There is no one on earth who can constantly go smoothly, and reach success in one small footstep. Therefore, it is of great importance to understand the way of confronting the setbacks and hardship in the process of reaching success. Setbacks and hardships are a mountain, whoever cross over the mountain can achieve the final success, but those who fail to do so is destined to fail.

In facing hardships and setbacks, everyone feels bad, everyone feels pain, and there are two kinds of behaviour of confronting pains in general.

The first one is being remorseful, moaning and trying to escape. They will scold and beat themselves in their hearts, thinking they are good-for-nothing, a totally useless person, a fool, a retarded person, etc. They give themselves a lot of labels. And after they have been beaten and wounded seriously by themselves, they force themselves to defeat their difficulties right away. They do not allow themselves to have the slightest error, or else they will beat and scold themselves even more in their heart. Then, they will force themselves to defeat the difficult right away in an even crazier manner. This is purely autosadism, and is merely a vicious cycle. You say, how can they overcome any difficulty and hardship? Therefore, they become more evasive on pains and complaining. This kind of people, instead of regarding them as defeated by hardships, we should say they have defeated themselves.

The second behaviour is accepting, encouraging and striving. When they have encountered hardships and difficulties, the first thing they do is to be accepting to oneself, forgiving that they have gotten things wrong again. And then, they will encourage themselves, telling themselves that this is just a failure at this moment. By striving hard and keep on taking actions, they will succeed one day. Finally, their wishes are fulfilled, and they succeed.

In the process of walking out of OCD, these two behaviours can both happen on our OCD patients. The recovery of OCD is a process, in which you may plunge into your symptoms again and again, suffering and having setbacks. In those times, if your behaviour is the first one, then you are only adding more suffering to your suffering. The result is predictable. However, if you are having the second behaviour, then I have to congratulate you, as your recovery is only a matter of time.

Therefore, every one of us should learn to accept ourselves, love ourselves, forgive ourselves and encourage ourselves. This is just like a child getting a bad academic result and is crying before you. You say, what can we do to help this kid not only not to cry, but to get a better result? To scold him and degrade him by calling him a stupid pig or a retarded person, to hit him hard so as to relieve your anger, and force him to get full mark in exams tomorrow? Or to be understanding, pat his shoulder lightly, and say, 'a failure is not a big deal, if only you work hard, I believe you can do better.' And then summarise the experiences, and let him understand the correct way of learning, so as to help him to walk out of his own confusion?

And I want to say, you are the child who gets poor academic result. To be able to walk out of difficulties or not depends on your attitude towards yourself.

Accept uneasiness and then you can feel more at ease

The Buddha said, ‘there is no permanence’. A philosopher (Heraclitus) said, ‘no man ever steps in the same river twice.’ These sayings are all unveiling the fact that the world is constantly in motion and changing.

Why do our OCD patients have so much uneasiness, anxiousness, worry and fear? That is because they are, in the deepest of their heart, striving for a constantly safe environment and constant selves.

Change is the nature of the world, and you are striving for no changes, so the result is predictable: You will only be hit hard by the reality and in fear perpetually. This is because what you are pursuing is defying the nature of the universe.

I remember an OCD patient who asked me that his current job was insecure, easy to lose his job, lacking a sense of safety. Therefore, he was stressful. He wanted to know what he should do to be less stressful. I said, ‘the reason why you are so stressful is because you still believe that there is a secure and stable job in this world. So when you lose your job, you think that it should not happen. You blame the world for treating you unfairly. However, blaming is not able to solve any problem, hence you are so stressful. In fact, you just need to change your understanding, and realize that there are no jobs that are perpetually stable. When losing your job has become a normal matter, you will not be so afraid of that. Only by that can you calmly face it, not to grumble, and try hard to take actions to overcome hardships and change the status quo.

Similarly, to obtain a sense of safety, our OCD patients have to accept that this world is impermanent, uneasiness presents in nature. What is permanent in this world is the presence of changes. With this in mind, you can discard the false aspiration of having perpetual safety and unchanging matters. Therefore, you will accept uneasiness unperturbedly when it comes, and you will know what you should do and what you can do, thus walking out of your difficulties.

Afraid of losing control and losing favourable turns

Morita Therapy tells us if we totally accept our thoughts or emotions, not to care about them, and be persistent in doing what we should do, then we can walk out of OCD.

The idea is easy, everyone can understand. However, OCD patients are often still unable to really not to care about their emotions, because they have a worry. They are worried that: If I do not care, what can I do if things get out of control? Therefore, they are still unable to let go of their emotions.

But I want these friends to really think about a problem: For so many years, you have been

controlling anxiousness, controlling distracting thoughts, but why are you getting more and more anxious, and more and more distracting thoughts? Why do you feel that the more you try to control, the more you feel they are uncontrollable? According to the past experiences and the reality, is it your control that makes you unable to control them, or is it not controlling that makes you unable to control them?

Those with such kind of confusion and worry actually do not have an experience of not controlling. However, what I want to say is: They have known the idea that by not caring about emotions and distracting thoughts, they can walk out of OCD. They also had no experiences of not to care about them. As such, on what basis do they believe that not to care about anxiousness and distracting thoughts will lead to them losing control?

In fact, this is caused by their inertia thinking. They are still using their imaginations as criteria in judging matters. They mistake imaginary stuff as something real, believing that not to care will lead to losing control. However, they have not noticed the fact that those who are really recovering, on the contrary, have abandoned utterly their control over their emotions.

Therefore, I want to tell those who are still controlling their emotions and distracting thoughts: Let go of your control! When you do not care utterly, and just do what you should do, you are right on the turning point of your life. Only in this way can your anxiousness reaches its apex naturally, and then you will take a turn for the better. Your distracting thoughts will also vanish in the thin air. If you still care, you will never take hold of the turning point, and will never get out of obsessions.

The problem of 'let me try it out first'

After having psychological counselling, a lot of patients like to say, 'let me try it out first.' After hearing this, I know they cannot succeed.

That is because behind these words, there is another sentence hidden, which is: If the effect of the therapy is not good, I can just beat a retreat. The expression 'try it out' actually serves as a foundation for beating a retreat.

The process of getting out of OCD is definitely not always smooth, the relapsing of symptoms happens for sure. If patients just have an attitude of 'trying it out', then, when they are encountering the relapse of symptoms, they will think the therapy is really ineffective. Then, they will have a lot of thoughts. For example, they may believe their efforts are utterly in vain. They may think, 'can I recover with Morita Therapy?' 'Why is God doing this to me?' 'Why am I having obsessions?' Or they may plunge into their symptoms to fight against their symptoms.

One cannot get out of OCD at all if they are like this.

Therefore, I want to tell my OCD friends: Abandon your attitude of 'trying it out', bring out your courage, cut out all means of retreat, and insist on walking to the very end. That is because, no matter it is to cure OCD, or other matters in our daily life, to succeed, you will definitely encounter

setbacks. However, those setbacks do not indicate that you have returned to the starting point, they are merely the barriers you must face in the process of reaching your goal. Only with insistence can you reach your goal!

Let anxiousness return to its simple state

To walk out of obsession, solving anxiousness is a critical task, because anxiousness is in fact the control mechanism of your symptoms. Once you can break through anxiousness, then your symptoms are of little effect on you.

Some OCD friends always complain to me that, ‘even when I have not cared about my symptoms, anxiousness is still present. It is really painful, what should I do?’ And my answer is, ‘accept your anxiousness.’

We know that obsessions are in fact a bad habit. Therefore, when you stop your habit, anxiousness will surely appear. But I want to say, the real matter that makes you feel painful is not the habit of anxiousness, but your anxiousness towards the habitual anxiousness. Therefore, your anxiousness actually has two layers, that is why you are so painful.

And where does the anxiousness towards the habitual anxiousness come from? It comes from your idea that habitual anxiousness is abnormal, and should not happen. You are repulsing it. Therefore, to get out of anxiousness, you have to accept anxiousness first. Accept the fact that habitual anxiousness is normal, because in this way, you will not create another layer of anxiousness by repulsing the habitual anxiousness. And anxiousness can go back to its simplest state.

You can surely tolerate anxiousness in its simple state, and you can also discover that there is a sense of calmness in your simple anxiousness.

Then, if only you insist on doing what you should do, to live earnestly, then you can solve the problem of anxiousness very well. Thereby you can walk out of OCD more quickly.

Afraid of meeting Mr. Deng (the author)

Recently, a few clients of my consultation have asked me during their consultation, ‘Mr. Deng, I am a bit scared of seeing you.’ I asked them why, they said, ‘initially, I followed what you told me to do, and it was great, my symptoms had been reduced. However, recently, every week I meet you for my consultation, I think of my symptoms. That makes me to be more focused on my symptoms.’ He asked me if he was right. I replied,

‘Firstly, Mr. Morita was originally an OCD patient. He had been meeting and treating OCD patients in his whole life, why did he not focus on his own symptoms again?’

Secondly, the consultation is just one hour per week. We can say it occupies just a very small

fraction in your life, so can it affect your daily life? It won't, unless you are still holding on your symptoms.

Thirdly, you are afraid of seeing me, or your symptoms? I am just the appearance of your symptom, which is the real thing that matters. You are afraid of confronting with me. That indicates you are still repulsing and evading your symptoms. This is why you have not recovered to this day. The real meaning of recovery is not that symptoms do not appear again forever, but that even when symptoms arise before you, they do not affect you much.

Therefore, to confront with me is to, without any misgiving, really confront and accept the symptoms. Therefore, from now on, please let go of your thought of afraid of meeting me. Do not care about it. Meet me naturally, leave naturally, and then go to live naturally. You can thereby take another step forward.

Put down

To put down is a teaching of the Buddha. He told us to put down all our stubborn and obstinate attitudes toward things we encounter, such that we can obtain joy and freedom.

Morita Therapy originates from teachings of Buddhism. Therefore, in order to walk out of your symptoms, you have to 'put down'. A lot of people have discussed about it, but they are all metaphysics, making it bewildering. So, I will talk about 'put down' once again today, allowing it to be put into practice.

Here, we have to discuss a problem first, which is why OCD symptoms are always so obstinately holding us, not letting go of us? How many of you have really thought about it? But here, I want to tell you guys, it is not our symptoms that are holding us tightly, but we are holding our symptoms stubbornly and tightly!

Why? As I have previously mentioned, symptoms are not really 'symptoms' initially, but simply some random thoughts. Even though these thoughts can be weird, dirty, horrifying, and worrying, they are the same as our joyful and majestic thoughts-they happen naturally, and everyone has such thoughts. They follow the ever-moving characteristic of the world, just like sunrise and sunset. Anything that appears will also disappear, that is natural.

However, when our OCD friends are confronting such thoughts, they are not accepting their natural characteristic. They focus wholeheartedly on the thoughts that are normal and will naturally disappear. What is more, they deliberately control and repulse these thoughts, trying to fend them off from their mind eternally. However, these thoughts are originally natural and normal, how can we eliminate them? This is as if a person trying hard to live without breathing, all but endless pain is obtained. With this intense pain, OCD patients become more scared and eager to eliminate these thoughts. Thus, they tried even harder to control and repulse their thoughts. Thereby, they fell into an even deeper abyss, and causing the formation of symptoms.

Therefore, symptoms are caused by our defiance against natural characteristic. To be specific, it is caused by your active repulsion against the thoughts in your mind. That is why I express that it is not symptoms that are holding you, but you are holding symptoms tightly. You have created your own symptoms.

After knowing all these, we can understand how to do is to put down. In a word, really really simple, 'let nature take its course' is to 'put down'. The concrete method is that, when symptoms arise again, please do not repulse them, because they are normal in nature. They will disappear anyway, not to care about them is already ok. Do what you should do, and you have put down your symptoms.

The expression 'one over one thousand' (just in case) is the manifestation of perfectionism

OCD patients have a lot of worries in their daily life. In fact, they also know that most of their worries are redundant and meaningless, but still, they do not put those thoughts down. This is because they have found a reason for themselves to worry, 'not afraid of the probability of nine hundred and ninety nine over one thousand of not having a mishap, but afraid of having a mishap with a probability of one over one thousand'. A lot of friends discussed the chance of having mishaps with a probability of one over a thousand with me. They know that the chance of having the mishap which comes up to their mind is very slim, they can understand it thoroughly, but they are still having the same worrying behaviour.

So what is the reason for making OCD friends to take heed to the mishap of such a small probability, but not to large probability of having no mishap? The root of it is, still, perfectionistic characteristic. Then what is perfectionism? To be perfect is not an aspiration on a macro scale, but on a micro one. Perfectionism is manifested from the details, and that fear of the probability of one over one thousand happens to be a detail of a detail (extreme detail, extreme micro). So, for sure OCD friends need to hold it tightly.

Now, we all know why OCD patients cannot let go of that small probability-because there is perfectionism behind OCD patients. So, when you are having worries about things with such a small probability of happening, you have to know that they are the manifestation of perfectionism. The small probability is a trap. You do not need to be entangled with those worries, but do what you should do. That is because the small probability is not something that can be controlled by us humans. If something with such a small probability of one over a thousand really happens onto you, what you can only do is to 'accept your fate', and face the reality.

To accept is to let sweetness come after bitterness

To walk out of symptoms, accepting symptoms is the only way.

A lot of OCD patients understand that, and put that into practice in their daily life. However, in the process of accepting symptoms, many problems arise and confuse them. For example, they may think, 'I have accepted symptoms, why do the symptoms still exist? Why can't I accept symptoms calmly? I do not really know what to do so that I am accepting symptoms for real!'

In fact, these problems arise because patients have a misunderstanding: Believing that to accept symptoms is a calm and comfortable process; believing that symptoms will disappear right away once they have accepted symptoms. But the reality is, to accept is a and painful process and requires time, that is why when Mr. Morita referred to 'accepting symptoms', he said 'to withstand pain'. Only by withstanding pain can the final sweetness comes.

Therefore, although you are still uncomfortable and anxious, if only you have not repulsed, suppressed, or pay attention on your thoughts and emotions, allowing thoughts to come and go without caring about them, and try hard to do what you should do, try hard to live well, then this is acceptance. Having anxiousness and feeling uncomfortable in the process does not mean you are not accepting symptoms or fail to do so.

Have you all understood?

Throw away your 'head', return to nature

'Fundamentally no bodhi-tree exists
Nor the frame of a mirror bright.
Since all is voidness from the beginning,
Where can the dust alight?'

The poem above is a famous enlightened chant of the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism-Huineng. The meaning of it is that we are all Buddhas in nature, originally clean, peaceful and satisfying, without obstacles or problems whatsoever. Therefore, we have no need to eliminate those so-called 'dusk' and strive to be a Buddha. We are Buddhas if only we return to our original state.

This poem is of significant importance to our enlightenment. If you can understand it fully, then you have walked out of OCD completely. That is because it also tells us: You are also healthy and natural originally, without anything like obsessions. You have fallen into the abyss of obsessions because you are trying to eliminate the imaginary 'dusk' in your head, striving for 'cleanness'. To be simple, it means that 'though peace reigns over the land, people create trouble for themselves'. The core reason for having symptoms is because you are deliberately thinking, and you are deliberately thinking endlessly because of your fears and worries.

Therefore, it is very simple to walk out of OCD, which is to abandon your thoughts, abandon anything about your symptoms and Morita Therapy. Specifically, it is to abandon any thoughts about things with extremely slight probability, worries, and fear. They are just illusions. If you do

not believe that, just think: You have worried for so long, but how many of them have become reality? Give up checking yourself if your mood and symptoms are getting better, abandon any thoughts about when you can utterly walk out of your OCD, so on and so forth, as you are originally natural and healthy. Abandon your thoughts about what 'let nature take its course' should be, and the aspiration and confusion of 'do what you should do'. Abandon thoughts about how you should do is right, abandon Morita Therapy, abandon confusions about you should take drugs or not, so on and so forth. You abandon them because you are still only thinking! But you do not know that, whatever you do, they are all correct.

This world is originally natural and harmonious, and you are forever basked in the nature and harmony. Inharmony and unnatural reside purely in your thoughts and ideas only. Therefore, if only you abandon your 'head', you return to the nature.

Tao (The Way) of Chaos

'The Tao (The Way) is elusive and intangible.

Oh, it is intangible and elusive, and yet within is image.

Oh, it is elusive and intangible, and yet within is form.'

Laozi from 2000 years ago told us the meaning of Tao.

The Tao begot one.

One begot two.

Two begot three.

And three begot the ten thousand things.

Laozi also used the above words to describe the development of all things on earth.

Taiji (the initial state when the world is not yet formed and everything is muddled and intangible), yin and yang encircle each other. There is me in you, and you in me, rotating and interacting perpetually.

Looking at Taiji, how can we understand Tao?

The world arises from chaos (muddled; confused), so where is it going to go?

Laozi said, 'return to its simple and original, natural state.' The answer is to return to chaos.

So what about our soul? Where is it from, and where is it going to go? There is only one answer also: Coming from the chaos, and going to the chaos.

In chaos, such that we can be peaceful and calm, and only in chaos can we reach the state mentioned by Buddha-not produced, not destroyed; not defiled, not pure.

Where do the pains in our heart come from?

Buddha said that pains originate from our heart that likes to differentiate (distinguish, discriminate and separating). You have differentiated production and destroy, defiled and pure, good and bad.

Everyone comes from chaos, but they have forgotten chaos, and tried hard to differentiate. They want to get the good and destroy the bad, but they do not know that the bad are just like shades under the sun, never able to be eliminated.

Unless... There is no unless, because even if your life has disappeared, it is merely going back to chaos.

Where is the road to our recovery?

It is when you have accepted everything, with unlimited capacity, without differentiating, and return to chaos.

Laozi said, 'mingle with the mundane world.'

The greatest truths are the simplest

Recently, I saw that some patients were complaining that the ideas of 'let nature take its course' and 'do what we should do' of Morita Therapy were really good, but they lack specific ways to operation and specific changes. Therefore, they find the therapy hard to put into practice, and regard it as the defect of the therapy.

But in fact, it is because we have not really understood Morita. 'let nature take its course' and 'do what we should do' are not only living attitudes and theories, they are the specific methods of practising, very concise and clear.

And the reason why you have not got good result when using Morita Therapy is because of the misunderstanding of these two phrases; or you have not persisted in putting them into practise, given up halfway; or you just do not believe or know that these simple phrases are already specific procedures, and to blindly search for even more specific procedures.

Laozi said that the greatest truths are the simplest, the real methods and ways of solving things are very often the easiest. Therefore, please be aware of this point, so as to prevent yourself from going far astray.

The fundamental way

1. The fundamental world

What is the origin of everything? We still have to discuss from the Buddhist enlightened chant of Huineng, the Six Patriarch.

‘Fundamentally no bodhi-tree exists
Nor the frame of a mirror bright.
Since all is voidness from the beginning,
Where can the dust alight?’

I have quoted this chant in my previous article- “Throw away your ‘head’, return to nature”. It is to tell us, that we are Buddhas originally, originally satisfying, clean and peaceful. Since we do not have any obstacles or problems at all originally, we have no need to aspire to be Buddhas, we just need to return to our original selves, which are Buddhas.

Similarly, our world is the same, it is originally natural and harmonious, without high or low, black or white, good or bad, clean or dirty, living or death, so on and so forth, as they are merely constituent parts of the world. The so-called difference is only created by our hearts which differentiate things. They are one entity, there is no need to divide them. Therefore, if only we do not differentiate again, then everything returns to its origin, which is the state that Buddha said, without clean or dirty, living or death. Definitely, by ‘without clean or dirty, living or death’, it does not mean there is no cleanness, no dirtiness, no living and no death, but to say that they are one unified entity, there is no need to differentiate.

This is actually also a notion of philosophy. If we are always applying the notion of opposites to treat and solve matters, then matters will be endless, and we are going to solve them endlessly. In fact, if we turn and apply the notion of unity, then everything is a harmonious and natural unity. Every problem is not a problem.

All ways return to one, all truths are interlinked. If we use the chant of Huineng on psychological consultations and treatments, Huineng was actually telling us that our hearts are originally healthy and free, harmonious and natural, there is no problem whatsoever. Therefore, when psychological problems arise, what we should do is not to aspire from outside for health, or self-healing, but to return to our original, fundamental selves, then everything is fine and dandy.

2. Fundamental understanding

Every one of us is the same at the initial stage when we first arrive to this world, being an innocent, natural and harmonious unity. Because of that, we can at times see that a baby is playing with its faeces.

But why have we become various kinds of people afterwards? Even when facing the same issue, why do we have various views on that? That is because, although we are originally the same, but we have different ‘parents’. Of course, by ‘parents’ I am not only referring to our parents who gave birth to us, but also all sorts of habits, cultures and traditions. They use various methods to educate us. For example, when our ‘parents’ see that we are playing with our faeces, ‘parents’ will surely stop us instantly, or even hit us, threaten us, preventing us from playing with it. It is also from this stage that we gradually separate from the harmonious nature, starting to understand we ourselves and

this world by differentiation. At the same time, when we are growing up, we encounter a lot of things, and we differentiate them under the education of our 'parents'. Various viewpoints and rules about all sorts of things are formed. They covered up our original selves from us, and we are getting further and further away from our original selves. Can you find any adults still playing with their faeces? That is because they have known thoroughly that faeces are definitely dirty! If they continue playing them, others will definitely say that they are psychopaths, and they themselves will also think they are abnormal.

So, what is our psychological problem? It is the fact that we have realized that faeces are dirty, and at the same time we come upon faeces times after times. Let's imagine: You suddenly fall into a dung pit, what should you do? Will you feel anxious, uneasy, disgusted, eagerly longing to get away from it? So you desperately try to climb out of the pit. Unfortunately, the pit is very slippery, not only are you unable to climb out of the pit, but you fell deeper into it. Therefore, you start to blame yourself, hate yourself and even forcing yourself to climb out of the pit as soon as possible. But since you are already very nervous and flustered, how can you escape from it? So you are trapped here, unable to move.

What should we do to get out of the pit? Laozi from 2000 years ago has told us clearly, 'be simple and return to your nature.' Return to the original state of a baby, and you can get away, because babies will treat faeces as their loveliest toys. Suddenly falling into a pit with so many toys, how happy it is! So will there be any problem? Everything is originally natural and harmonious. There is no problem with the 'dung pit', there is no problem with us, the one that is problematic is the understanding we obtain when we grow up.

Hence, the Buddha said, 'All of Dharmadhatu (the essence or expanse of phenomena) come from our mind.' The root cause of all pains is that the understanding we pick up in our life has hidden our harmonious origin. This is the fundamental understanding we have to know.

3. The fundamental method

We are all the same initially, harmonious and natural. What is this origin then? It is the Tao that Laozi said, it is the Buddha that Buddha said. It is the foundation of growth and changes. It lasts eternally and remains unchanged. It begets one, two, three and infinite amount of understandings.

The main difference between eastern and western civilizations is the tendency of the way of thinking. Western civilizations are always striving towards specializing and differentiating, while eastern civilizations are working towards generalizing, unifying and creating formless ideas. To give an example, the science in the west always starts with a scientist raising a theory, and then his predecessors strive to improve it. For the east, after Laozi had raised his ideas and theories, they have never been changed for 2000 years. Instead, it was always that, people from his later generations did not understand his ideas well, and then they tried hard to learn more from him. Where is the reason for the difference? It is because of the difference in the angle of thinking.

Westerners always raise ideas from the notion of opposite, so they can differentiate endlessly; For easterners, they raise ideas from the notion of unity. By the time an idea is raised, it is already completed. Take us 'human' as an example. If we think in westerners' notion, we can have something like this: Human can be divided into male and female. Male and female definitely have a lot of differences, so we can continue to investigate and differentiate subsequently on them endlessly. But if we think in easterners' notion, the idea of 'human' is already completed and generalized, as both male and female are human. Human is already the final outcome, so there is no need to further investigate.

Sigmund Freud is a great sage. His psychoanalysis is known as Depth Psychology because it unveils the secrets of the subconscious mind that we cannot know. It let us know that we are not our masters, subconsciousness is. His disciple Jung walked an even greater distances and even deeper than him. He let us know that, beneath our subconsciousness, there are collective unconsciousness and archetypes that are ruling us. And in those sects in western cognitive psychology, our pains are derived from our unreasonable understandings. Therefore, if only we change our understanding, then we will be happy.

Even though western masters of psychology are devoted to searching for ways to liberate our hearts, regrettably, because of the difference in civilizations, their methods used are nonetheless too far away from our origin. They are spinning around our development at the latter stage. This is also the reason why the psychology from the west has many complicated theories, with so many sects, and so many ways of solving things. They are ceaselessly differentiating from the notion of opposite.

And our hearts are in fact like trees. Our normal understandings and thoughts are the leaves of our trees; our subconsciousness is our tree trunks. What about our collective unconsciousness? It is the root of our trees. Here, the study of western psychology has reached the origin. That is what people think. But that is not the case, because trees are not trees, trees are just the result of changes at the latter stage. The origin of a tree is not the root buried beneath the earth, but the seed! The trees that we are now are developed from seeds. The seeds simply disappeared as time went by and as they develop. They have slowly changed and forgotten they are originally seeds only. And this is just the same as our growth. The more we grow up, and the more we understand, the more we forget and get separated from the natural and harmonious origin when we were babies. So we get lose, becoming slaves of our 'understandings', or we can say, slaves of our hearts.

Therefore, the fundamental method of walking out of difficulties is to return to our origin.

You are still the master of yourself!

4. The road to return

First of all, you have to have a fundamental understanding that you at this present moment is not your original self. You at this present moment is another you developed from latter stages. Your present understandings are learned at the latter stage. Your present sufferings are also caused by

what you have learned at your latter stage.

Therefore, from now on, please separate your original and latter stages (the present you who is suffering), and return to your original one.

Secondly, if the present you is not the original and harmonious you, then what do you think your present sufferings are? Are they real sufferings in this world? No, they are just pains developed from your mind. Therefore, do you think you have such a need to fight against and linger about the pain that is created by your own imagination? There is no such need. Please accept them, release them, and put it aside. There is no need to care about it, it is no more than a dream, let it come and go.

Thirdly, return to the original you, and you are free at this present moment. If you want to do something, do it. If you do not want to do something, do not do it. If you want to be blessed and happy, then strive for it, take actions from now on.

Fourthly, even though you are already free when you have returned to your original self, it does not mean pain will leave you alone instantly. That is because the seed has grown to a tree, there are a lot of memories and experiences which are not easy to give up, so how will you be willing to return to the insignificant seed? Although the latter you makes you feel painful, but you have accustomed to this pain, so the habitual pain will remain temporarily. However, that is not a problem, be the original you just as you did in the past. Knowing the present you is the latter you is already enough, you do not need to care about the latter you, as one will surely awake from one's dream, there is no need to be impatient. Just treat it as watching a horrifying, exciting and funny movie.

Time will naturally allow you to become your own master once again.

What is pain? Pain is that you cannot laugh when you laugh, you cannot cry when you cry.

What is the superficial freedom? Superficial freedom is you laugh when you should laugh, you cry when you should cry.

Then what is the fundamental freedom? The fundamental freedom is you laugh when you want to laugh, you cry when you want to cry.

Liars

1.

Once upon a time, Zhang San leaves home to get something done. When he is on his way, he saw a man chasing at him and said to him, 'oh my goodness, your home is on fire!' Zhang San heard that. A fire is a big deal! So he ran home quickly. However, when he returns home, where is the fire? His home remains intact, and there was no fire.

Zhang San knows that he is cheated, so he continues his journey to get something done. However, not long, that liar who has just cheated him comes again, and told him, 'oh my goodness, a thief has broken into your home!' Zhang San replied, 'you are lying to me again, I suppose. I

won't trust you!' But that man said, 'I haven't lied to you this time, I saw a few thieves cracked open the door and entered your house with my own eyes!' Zhang San pondered for a while, thinking that he is still cheating him, so he does not take heed of that man. That man saw that he has failed this time, so he threatened Zhang San and said, 'that's fine, it is up to you not to believe it, but if everything in your house has been robbed, do not blame on me that I haven't warned you!'

Hearing what that man has just said, Zhang San feels scared this time, thinking that, 'what if what he has just said is true?' So he trusted that man once again, and returned home quickly. Again, Zhang realized that nothing has happened, quiet as the grave. This time, Zhang San knows full well that man is a liar. Therefore, he continued his journey again. But again, that liar is really shameless, he runs to Zhang San and said, 'oh my goodness, the sow at your home has climbed up a tree!' Zhang was annoyed and retorted, 'It is the sow of yours which has climbed up a tree!' No matter what the liar says, Zhang does not listen, and continued his way. After getting his thing done, he returns home and still finds that everything is fine and dandy. From then on, that liar never lies to Zhang San again, because he knows that he is a smarty, believing in facts, and will never believe his lies again.

2.

Once upon a time, Li Si has to go out to get something done too, but when he is halfway on his way. He realizes that, 'it seems that I haven't locked the door before I leave.' So he rushes back home quickly. When he has returned home, he discovers that he has locked his door.

Therefore, Li Si continues his way, but when he is on his way, he realizes one thing, again, 'oh, I have locked the door, but it seems that the gas stove has not yet been switched off.' So he rushes back home to switch off the gas stove. Once he is in the kitchen, he finds that the stove has been switched off already.

So, Li Si continues his journey once again. However, when he has got halfway, a thought strikes him again, 'the window at home seems to have not been shut, it would be disastrous if thieves get into home.' So he rushes back home. All the same as before, he notices the window has been shut actually.

And once again, Li Si continues his journey. Unexpectedly, a thought strikes him one more time: The gate of his hogpen at home seems to have not been closed, what if those pigs escape and climb up trees? Even though Li Si knows that the probability is very small, but he returns home nonetheless. The fact is that the gate is tightly closed.

Again and again, Li Si returns home when he gets halfway. At last, he has not done anything for the whole day. Instead, he is totally exhausted.

3.

What do you guys think when you have read the stories of Zhang San and Li Si?

In fact, the reason why I want to write these two stories is to tell you that Zhang San and Li Si

have both met liars. It is just that the liar Zhang San meets is a liar from without, and that of Li Si is a liar from within, in his heart.

It is easy to distinguish a liar from without, while it is not for a liar from within. That is because no one would expect one's own heart will deceive oneself. However, even though liars can be divided to be from within and from without, their lying tactics have no difference. First of all, the liar will frighten you, so that you will be scared and worried. Then you will be deceived and follow what he says. In fact, it is rather easy to let go of yourself from their lying tactics, which is to let facts to be the only criteria, just see how the reality is like. Just like Zhang San. He has been deceived twice, and then he discovered that the fact is not the same as what the liar has said. Therefore, he never trusts him again, because he is a liar, why do you need to trust him again?

And who is the liar from your heart? He is our symptoms. I want to ask you here, he has deceived you for so long, but has anything that worries and frightens you really happened? Actually, every time you think, check and confirm repeatedly, the reality is telling you that, 'he is a liar, he is a liar!' Are you really that stupid not having discovered that he is a liar yet?

Surely, if you know that he is a liar now, but you still believe in him, then I have nothing to say!!

But I know that you are not that stupid!

The origin of symptoms

There are a myriad of symptoms of OCD, for example, thinking repeatedly if the lamp hanging from the ceiling will fall, thinking repeatedly how one can speak without offending others, or wash hands repeatedly. However, after all, the reason for OCD patients to think and do repeatedly is because of their worries and fear: Worrying the lamp will fall and hit oneself, fearing one's speech will offend others, fearing one will get sick because of the bacteria on one's hands... That is why they think or do something repeatedly, so as to avoid these worrying things from happening, and aims to eliminate their worries and fear.

What is the essence of fear and worries? It is the lack of a sense of security.

When someone is lack in security, he will definitely be terribly suspicious, always worrying and afraid that something uncontrollable may happen. Searching for a sense of security is our instinct, so in this situation, we will obtain security through certain means. And thus obsessive thoughts and behaviours are created. So what is the reason for their creation? It is to obtain a sense of security. This is also why OCD patients feel that they cannot control their symptoms. The more they try to control, the more they are unable to control. That is because to control is actually going against our human instinct, the instinct of searching for a sense of security. Who is willing to stand on the edge of a cliff? To control oneself not to worry implies that not only one should stand on the edge of a cliff, but also to jump from the cliff and fall. Therefore, in order to save oneself and avoid dangers, OCD patients can only think even harder, or do certain things even more.

So, what are the factors that cause OCD patients to be so in lack of a sense of security? There are two main factors:

1. Matters concerning parents

Found out from a lot of OCD patients, we learn that they have strict or even harsh parents in their early years. The parents often criticise, educate, and control exceedingly. Some even hit and scold them. A patient had informed me how strict his father was. For instance, his teacher has evaluated him twice and gave him two results: 5minus and 4plus. We know that the two results are the same, it is just two different ways of expression. What about his father? His father could not tolerate 4plus. Whenever his teacher rated him 4plus, he would be beaten up by his father, but if he got 5minus, he would not be beaten.

To a child, where does his sense of security come from? It comes from his parents' caring and love towards him. However, if what a child experiences is not the magnanimousness and love of their parents, but threats on the contrary, then this child will lose his sense of security. That is because in the eye of a child, he will believe that if his parents, who are so close to him do not treat him well, surely others and the outside world be even more insecure.

At the same time, the one-sided and absolute attitude will also let kids to learn to be one-sided and unilateral in treating the world and problems, expecting things to be black-and-white. This is why OCD patients are likely to have obstinate, one-sided, inflexible, and diehard conservative personalities. And this makes me think of a problem faced by an OCD patient in his treatment. When he heard from someone that he had to 'carry your symptoms with you and live', which is literally different from 'not to care about symptoms and live' that I had told him, he was afraid that they were contradictory. He was very anxious for that. But what is the truth? The truth is that both of the phrases are the same in meaning. 'To live and carry your symptoms with you' is 'not to care about symptoms and live'; 'not to care about symptoms and live' is 'to live and carry your symptoms with you'. These two phrases are just the same as the 4plus and 5minus, they are simply expressed from different angles. The reason why he was anxious was because he had learned to be one-sided and to standardize. He will be afraid of getting things wrong if anything is not standardised, just like the person who was afraid he would be beaten if he get 4plus.

Sigmund Freud believed that the reason why one gets OCD is because one's parent were over-controlling and imposed too harsh punishments when they teach one to control his own excretion when one is a baby, creating Anal retentiveness personality. We can imagine: How will a baby feel when its parents punish and control harshly in order to control its excretion? Right, just as aforementioned, the baby/kid will feel that he is threatened by his parents. He will be scared and anxious, lacking in a sense of security. If a child has to obtain a sense of security, what he has to do is to impose self-discipline, to be overcautious, to keep on the rails, or to be overly clean and tidy. These are exactly the characteristics of Anal retentiveness, and are also shared among OCD patients. And this reminds me of a childhood experience of one of my consultation clients. He told me that

what he remembered most was that, when he was studying at the kindergarten, he felt that the toilet there was dirty. Therefore, he had never excreted there. Even if he had a strong desire to defecate, he had to hold on and defecate once he returned home.

Surely, not all parents of OCD patients are harsh and strict. A lot of them treat their children very well, or even, they dote on them. However, regrettably, just as overly strict parents cannot provide children a sense of security, overly doting parents cannot provide children a sense of security either. That is because overly doting implies that, even when their sons and daughters are not babies and are growing up, parents are still always treating them as if they are babies. They do everything for their children. So to say, the children raised by doting parents are deformed, as they may look like an adult, but they have minds of babies. Once this kind of children has left their parents, they cannot do anything, and whatever they do, they fail easily. Therefore, they are always timid, overcautious, misgiving, keep on the rails, and always like to run away from problems. The outside world is a threat to them. They have no sense of security, because in the eyes of a baby, leaving parents is equivalent to waiting to die, so how can there be security?

2. Psychological trauma in the past

Other than lacking proper educations from parents, there is another factor for the lack of security. The other factor is the extremely traumatic experience we encountered in childhood. For example, a female OCD patient related to me that the reason for her having OCD is because she was sexually harassed by an adult in her childhood. That is why she was so insecure about the outside world. The second reason is because she was afraid her experience will be known to others. In such psychological conflict, she got OCD. Take another OCD patient as an example, what was his trauma? It was when he was very small, his father, who is powerful and capable of protecting him in his eyes, was sent to jail wrongfully. All of a sudden, he felt that the world was about to crumble, becoming very insecure about the outside world. Although his father was finally proved to be innocent and returned to his normal life, his insecurity about the world at that period of time had rooted deeply in his heart. He was afraid that something unfortunate would happen again.

Definitely, there are a lot of psychological traumas, something like a divorce of one's parents can also lead to one's lack of security.

The above two factors are the important factors for causing insecurity. Those who have such experience do not have a sense of security to the outside world. Therefore they will form an introverted, sensitive, keep on the rails, overcautious, suppressed, illusionary (like to produce illusions), thoughtful, perfectionistic personality. They will be doubtful and pessimistic in viewing the world. When facing stresses in their daily life, they are always exceedingly worrying. They always plunge into their own thoughts.

However, one thing that I would like to make it clear is that a lack in a sense of security may not necessarily cause OCD. That is because the essence of OCD contains another factor other than anxiousness and fear, which is conflict and repulsion. OCD patients always turn against themselves in their mind. They always think that certain thoughts should not appear. If they appear, they go

all out to repulse and suppress these thoughts.

Then what is the reason for the emergence of the repulsion?

According to Sigmund Freud, it is because of the suppression towards sex.

Puberty is a period when the incidence of OCD is high. A lot of OCD patients get OCD at this period. This is related to the psychological and physiological growth during puberty. This is because we have to formally confront our sexual desire and sexual acts.

In my consultation with OCD patients, it has been found that a lot of them have exceedingly anxious experiences and mental burden related to masturbation during their puberty. Some patients, although they are adults already, even asked me, 'is masturbation immoral, and harmful to health?'

Sex is a human instinct, and masturbation is an utterly normal way of easing sexual impulse. If you do not overdo it, it will not harm your body. However, because of the traditional and wrong sexual concepts (e.g. sex is dirty, immoral, filthy, and harmful to health) are deeply rooted, teenagers in puberty will feel guilty and remorseful after they have masturbated. They are afraid they may receive certain punishment, or may harm their health. Or they are fearful of letting others know that they masturbate. Therefore, in order to get rid of them, they may control themselves not to masturbate totally, suppressing their sex drive. But sex is a human instinct, to control it totally is impossible. Therefore, when they have masturbations, they will be even more remorseful and controlling. They will plunge into serious self-repulsion and frustration. This is the origin of the conflict and struggle of symptoms. In fact, the struggle and conflict of symptoms only signifies their struggle against their own sex drive. So to say, symptoms are just manifestations of the habitual thinking caused by the long term repulsion.

Therefore, there are two causes for OCD symptoms to develop: The lack of security and suppression of sex. At the same time, these two factors create a mentality which is unacceptant and repulsive towards oneself. This is the essence behind the symptoms. A lack of security will surely lead to one's over-aspiration for security. A lot of OCD patients feel that they are perfectionists, because in their mind, only when everything is almost perfect and absolutely secure can they feel safe and peaceful. However, nothing is perfect in the reality, so the more they pursue perfection, the more they suffer, and the more setbacks they receive. Hence, they will always blame, reproach and reject themselves, unwilling to face and accept their real selves. These also happen when OCD patients suppress their own sex impulse.

How to improve one's personality

Personality is the tendencies of one's thinking and behaviour. The manifestation of OCD is greatly related to our personality, so to improve our personalities are of paramount importance in walking out of OCD. During my consultations, a lot of OCD patients have recognised this and asked me how they can improve their personalities.

First and foremost, I will tell them that, personality is developed from a long time and is a fixed result. It is a habit that has developed for 10 years or more, since you were very small. Changing your habit is a lengthy process. It cannot be done instantly, so you have to be prepared to strive hard in the long term. There is an important precondition though, which is that you have to accept your present personality. Accepting your personality does not mean you do not improve yourself, on the contrary, it is the foundation of change and improvement. It indicates that you are really confronting your real self. Only on this foundation can you change yourself calmly, realistically and truthfully.

The second point I would like to say is that, the process of changing our symptoms is changing our personalities, they are synchronous. The manifestation of symptoms is in fact the reflection of our living attitude. For example, you repulse your symptoms, is it similar to your repulsion to yourselves in your daily life? You aspire to have miracles tomorrow, so that your OCD symptoms can be cured right away. Is it similar to you wanting yourself to succeed instantly in your daily life? You wash your hands repeatedly to eliminate bacteria, is it similar to your aspiration for perfection and your repulsion of any flaw in your daily life? You are anxious about your recovery of OCD, is it similar to you worrying in your daily life about still not having great achievements yet?

And where does our attitude about our daily life comes from? It comes from our personality tendencies. It is our personality tendency that causes us to have certain attitudes toward lives. Thus problems in our daily live arises, which in turn lead to the production of symptoms. Therefore, our personalities, living attitudes and symptoms are actually a unity. They have chain reactions with each other. Therefore, reversely, we accept symptoms, let nature take its course, throw away fantasies, being realistic, and do what we should do, and our symptoms can then be changed. And surely, our characteristics of our personalities such as being perfectionistic, illusionary and impatient, can be changed at the same time.

Before we have understood the chain effect as mentioned above, the whole process of our personality improvement occurs imperceptibly. What about when we have understood it? I think we should be more aggressive and pay more attentions on fostering a good living attitude. To do that, we have to have objective and correct understandings. Generally speaking it is to discard those unrealistic delusions, and to work hard step by step on the basis of accepting the reality. Moreover, we have to understand that a certain process is needed for everything to happen, and the result may not be as you have expected. This is because the world is ever-changing. You cannot control the world, but just to conform to the world, and make certain effort so as to obtain a certain probability of getting what you want.

One thing is also important, which is to nurture our interests and joy in our life. We should learn to enjoy our life. Some of our friends with OCD have boring and dull lives, always following the prescribed orders, living extremely orderly lives. Their intense aspirations in their heart for success and persistent personality lead to their strong self-discipline. They may even think that resting, or playing is a waste of time, and they just work hard isolatedly. What is the truth? The truth is that

‘grinding a chopper will not delay the work of cutting firewood’. Certain amount of rest and playing can adjust ourselves, and enhance our ability to succeed. Therefore, I believe that OCD patients should nurture their hobbies, get to know more friends, especially those who are extroverts. Spend more time and communicate more with them when we are free is of great benefit in improving our personalities.

Thirdly, I believe that one of the ways to improve our personalities is to understand how our personalities and symptoms come into being. This can let us know why we do and think about something automatically, as well as the motivational force behind them. Only by knowing these can we realize the truth and let loose from these situations. This is what the Buddha meant by ‘to understand is to change’. And what is the specific reason for the formation of our personalities and symptoms? It is due to our past experiences, especially when we were growing up. We form certain personalities because of our certain experiences, and certain personalities create certain attitudes towards life. Certain attitudes in turn bring forth our symptoms finally. This has been mentioned in my previous article ‘The origin of symptoms’.

In fact, personality itself cannot be described as good or bad. No matter one is an extrovert or an introvert, weak and strong points are always present. Being successful and happy or not is not determined by overcoming our weak points, but to take advantage of our strong points. So what we can do, or so as to say, the correct way of improving our personalities, is to improve our personalities, and not to change them totally. Take persistence as an example, one cannot succeed without persistence, as persistence implies perseverance and stamina. However, a lot of OCD friends suffer because of persistence. The fact is that it is not persistence itself that is harming you. It is just that you are too persistent and wrongly using persistence in struggling against your symptoms. Therefore, it is ‘over’-persistence and its ‘wrong usage’ that is problematic, but not persistence itself. And if you change your personality of being persistent, not persistent and work hard on anything, can you walk out of your symptoms? Impossible! It is because you have to have stamina and persistence to walk out of symptoms, it is just that you have to use it on the right spot, and view things objectively, abandoning the ‘over’-persistence.

As such, our most important attitude and behaviour on improving our personalities has emerged. It is to be persistent, and act normally, without being rash and strive on, as every change is a gradual process, requiring many small steps. It involves a process from quantitative change to qualitative change. If only we walk steadily step by step, definitely the joy of succeed will come to us one day.

‘To do what we should do’ is like water

To do what we should do is to live, and to do what we should originally do. We know that this is a good remedy to help us walk out of OCD. However, I want to explain one thing: to put this into good practise, we need to be flexible like water. Or we should say: we have to face the reality. On

the precondition of accepting and respecting our present state, we should try our best to do what we should do. We should not force ourselves to accomplish something without considering the reality.

For example, an OCD friend always had obsessive thoughts disturbing his studies, affecting his studying efficiency. In the past, he would force himself hard to learn and reach a certain level, making himself becoming more stressful and tense. If he failed to meet his own requirement, he would blame himself. He did that in the name of ‘not to care about my symptoms’, and ‘try hard to do what I should do’, but actually he was walking into a dead end. He was not respecting the reality, and this is also unable to get out of obsessions. So what is the correct way? First of all, we should accept that obsessions affect our efficiency, and we will study slower, and then? On the basis of accepting the reality, we try our best to study. That is it. But surely, if symptoms are too intense, that is fine, then do not try so hard to study, it does not matter, just take a rest, or do other stuff. It is fine to study later.

Another example is washing hands obsessively. If you can withdraw washing hands, and accept the anxiousness after not washing, it is great. But if you really failed to do that, and you really washed again, it does not matter, accept yourself. And then? Smile, carry with you an attitude of letting bygones be bygones. You have no need to reminisce and blame yourself whatsoever, just continue to do your work.

This is just like when we have caught cold. We feel dizzy and feeble. In such case, what we can do is just to try our best, and not to disregard our dizziness and feebleness, forcing ourselves to work and live as if we have not caught cold. As we have caught cold, then we will surely feel tired easily when we work and live. So taking a rest is perfectly normal. You just need to continue your work after taking a rest, you do not need to blame yourself and complain. You are unwell originally, why do you need to complain and blame? Isn’t that an act of shackling yourself, so as to make yourself feel even more uncomfortable?

‘Do what you should do’ is like water. Water always knows where it needs to go, but it never forces itself to go straight, but to go straight when it can, and bend when there is a turn. It just continues to move forward.

The stages of walking out of symptoms

Walking out of symptoms is a process which consists of 4 stages. Here I will explain and elaborate on them, hopefully it is of benefit to you. It aims to let us understand where we have reached, and where we should go next.

For the first stage, I call it the superficial stage of walking out of symptoms. That is because in this stage, what are perplexing us are those specific obsessive behaviours and ideas that we clearly know, such as worrying if the door is locked, checking things repeatedly, afraid of getting ill, repulsing certain thoughts repeatedly, and devote all of one’s energy on thinking about a certain

meaningless problem. In this stage, because we can clearly know what our symptoms are, if we correctly understand Morita Therapy and put it into practise, we can get through this stage quickly.

After that is the second stage: The core stage of walking out of symptoms.

After all the hard effort in first stage, the symptoms that perplex us are either relieved or disappeared. Consequently, we are relaxed and joyful. But at the same time, other problems may arise in our mind, for example, ‘am I letting nature to take its course in doing so?’, ‘Am I accepting myself and aware of whatever is happening, as told by Mr. Deng?’, ‘Am I acting through inaction?’, ‘If I have recovered, will symptoms repeat themselves?’... Therefore, they are perplexed by these questions. At last, they start to doubt if they are misunderstanding Morita Therapy, or if the therapy is useful.

This stage is also what we call by ‘theoretical obsession stage’ (obsession of theories). The reason why we plunge into this is because we have overlooked that fact that the core of symptoms is overly worrying and fear themselves. The theories of Morita have previously helped us to escape from OCD symptoms, so a lot of people regard them as the only lifebuoy in the sea. Hence, they will be overly persistent about Morita Therapy, and once again worry and fear if they have followed the theories. As we treat the theories as the lifebuoy, our awareness has been blindfolded, unaware that theories of Morita can also bring us to obsessions.

Actually this is very easy to comprehend. It is only the packaging of obsessions that has changed. In the past, we worried if the door is closed; now, we are worrying if we have followed and understood the theories. The essence of fear and worries is all the same. The way of going out of stage two is also quite easy, which is not to care about these worries. That is because, whatever you do, you are doing correctly. You take actions and live, and by that you walk out of obsessions.

The third stage: The repeats of symptoms.

In fact, the repeats of symptoms always exist. They are perfectly normal in the process of walking out of OCD. There are also some minor repeats in the first and second stage. It is just that the intervals between each repeat in the third stage are longer. For example, you have recovered for half a year or a year, however, you are perplexed by something once again. This is normal. The solution is the same as what I have mentioned. But it is easy to handle them anyway: Know that they are normal, and then let nature take its course just as before, and do what you should do. Nonetheless, we have to be reminded that as we have recovered for quite a while, sometimes we are persistent about being fine. We may think that we should not have symptoms again. With such thought, we are tied up once again. The fact is that no matter we are fine or not, we do not need to care. Just do what we should do, and live the life we should live, and that is it. And soon we can walk out of those repeats.

The fourth stage: Confront the life, improve our personalities.

The appearance of obsessions is deeply related to our personalities and attitudes towards life. Therefore, the last thing we should do is to build up an unperturbed attitude towards life, so as to grasp the ability to handle problems we face in our daily life.

Accepting symptoms is to accept oneself

The so-called symptoms are merely the superficial phenomenon of our problem. The essential problem is our self-denial, self-repulsion, and self-unacceptance.

For example, there is a patient with saliva obsession. How does he get his symptom? He saw someone he do not like showing off some good food, and then he drools. He was ashamed of himself for that, thinking he himself has no character. Therefore, a knot that cannot be unknotted is created. He becomes disgusted of his own saliva. Finally, he does not know if he should swallow or spit his saliva. How does this knot come into being? It is crystal clear that it comes from his own self-repulsion, he was ashamed of his drooling behaviour. In fact, drooling is a normal response to food, it is not at all related our interpersonal relationships.

Another example is that a student always being unable to concentrate when he is reading books. He was always perplexed by other things he saw in his peripheral vision. How is his symptom formed? It is formed because he has an idea in his mind, which is that he has to totally concentrate in reading his book, without having any distracting thoughts. He cannot be inattentive. However, he does not know that this thought is unrealistic, as no one can be 100% attentive and without any distract thoughts. Therefore, he is perplexed by his normal peripheral vision, hating himself for being so weak in willpower.

Therefore, if we want to walk out of obsession, not only do we need to accept symptoms, more importantly, we should accept our real self. We should not be assuming, being perfectionistic or being harsh to ourselves by forcing ourselves to do something we cannot accomplish in the reality. And definitely, we should not blame or hate ourselves because of failing to do that. In another word, we have to understand that the ideal selves and our real selves are two entirely different things. If we are to become ideal, there is no other way but to accept our real selves first. We should try hard on the basis of our capabilities in the reality, so that we can become our ideal selves step by step. So, please accept your real self from now on.

The footprints of Bodhisattva (an enlightenment-being)

On one night, a man has a dream.

He dreams of walking on the beach with Bodhisattva.

And scenes of his bygone days flash in the air.

He finds that for every scene, there are two lines of footprint on the beach,

One of which is his, and the other is Bodhisattva's.

When the last scene has ended, he looks back at the footprints on the beach.

He finds that there is, however, only one line of footprint for a number of sections.
And those sections happened to be those worst, difficult and excruciating times in his life.
He was bewildered, and asked Bodhisattva,

‘you have promised me, you said you will search for the sounds of sufferers to help them,
and once I have vowed to follow you, you will be always walking by my side to support me.
But now, I find that when I was suffering the most,
there was only one line of footprint!
I don’t understand, why do you, a benevolent being, leave me alone when I need your help most?’

The benevolent Bodhisattva replied softly,
‘you remind of me, and I support you, not a second do I leave you.
At those times when you were having the greatest difficulties, having the most excruciating sufferings,
you see that there is only a line of footprint,
because...I was carrying you through...

The Bodhisattva can represent your own heart. Rediscover that your heart is always supporting you. You believe that no one is supporting you, accepting you. You want everyone to accept you so that you can feel secure (which is impossible). But you do not realise that you only need to accept yourself, and everything will be fine. Others’ acceptance does not matter as much.

A mountain is seen as a mountain; the mountain
is not seen as a mountain; the mountain is still a mountain

‘A mountain is seen as a mountain, and water is seen as water. Later on, you see the mountain not as a mountain, and water not as water anymore. Finally, you see the mountain as a mountain, and water as water again.’

These three sentences are a famous koan (statement) of Zen Buddhism, originated from Master Wei-Zheng in the Song Dynasty (China). They describe the three stages in practising Buddhism. Actually these three stages are also the three processes when OCD patients walk out of obsession.

First sentence: A mountain is seen as a mountain, and water is seen as water.

Its original meaning is that normal people only view things superficially in their daily life. Therefore, they are easily puzzled and captivated by superficial phenomenon. They see the

superficial images of things as the reality and become persistent on it. Consequently, they plunge into an ever-changing cycle of pain. This is just like us being trapped by OCD, treating worries or thoughts in our minds as something real. We either think about them repeatedly, or do something to alleviate our anxiousness, or simply struggle against symptoms themselves. The consequent of these is plunging into them endlessly, trapped.

Second sentence: You see the mountain not as a mountain, and water not as water anymore.

In the Diamond Sutra, it is written, ‘every phenomenon is virtual (unreal)’. It means that when we observe or experience stuff attentively, we can discover that everything that we were persistent about is virtual and unreal. They are a dream. They are flowers in a mirror and the moon's reflection in water, why do we need to struggle against these virtual things? Isn't that simply plunging into an abyss endlessly? Therefore, the Diamond Sutra also writes, ‘enlightenment comes when we do not attach to anything(应无所住而生其心)’. This directly refers to the way to observe our natural instinct or the way of change.

The way of practising Buddhism varies: Zen meditation, visualization, etc. But generally speaking, they are all based on the idea that ‘enlightenment comes when we do not attach to anything’. For example, the Śamatha-vipaśyanā of Zen meditation requires people to have mindfulness. Other examples are the chanting of spells of Pure Land Buddhism and the visualisation of Tantric Buddhism. They all accept or are indifferent toward distracting thoughts (no matter it is good or bad, happy or sad) and ideas arose in the mind. They neither repulse nor care about them. Nor do they like them. One just concentrates on continuing chanting or visualizing Buddha. As the distracting thoughts are not disturbed by you deliberately, they follow the rule of nature, appearing and disappearing naturally. With persistence, we can reach enlightenment and find our true selves, obtaining imperturbability (samadhi power) at the same time. To be enlightened and imperturbed, a process has to be involved. This process, in another word, is ‘let nature take its course’, ‘do what we should do’ and ‘to live’, as mentioned in the Morita Therapy. This is just like to maintain mindfulness in Buddhist practice. ‘Let nature take its course’ is to accept the appearance of symptoms, and not to care about it. Then, we will not attach to symptoms, naturally coming and going. As time goes by, you will realise that symptoms are indeed virtual, and will not attach to and be persistent about it. Then, you can walk out of your symptoms.

The third sentence: You see the mountain as a mountain, and water as water again.

The Heart Sutra says, ‘all dharmas (phenomena) are empty: they are neither created nor destroyed, neither defiled nor pure, and they neither increase nor diminish.’ That means, the original characteristic of this world is empty, there is no create and destroy, no pure and defiled, surely there are no ‘increase’ and ‘diminish’. The original characteristic of this world-emptiness, is perpetually unchanged. Surely, what we mean by *empty* here is not ‘vacant’ and ‘there is nothing in the universe’. It is referring to harmony and nature, the original characteristic of this world is eternally

natural and harmonious. That means, not only is there no OCD whatsoever in this world originally, but there is also no any problem.

The Heart Sutra also says, ‘form itself is emptiness, and emptiness itself is form’. It is telling you to break through binary oppositions, and return to oneness. Essences are superficial, and superficialities are essences. Everything is natural and harmonious, everything is essence, and essence and superficialities have no difference. In another word, although you let nature to take its course, do what you should do, and walked out of symptoms, you may not be free totally. That is because you may still have the last discrimination, which is to be persistent in the discrimination of superficialities and essences, as well as good and bad. So to say, that is because you are still being mindful of the symptoms, still being far from something.

This world has no symptoms originally, isn’t the awareness unnecessary?

Then where do symptoms come from? The Buddha said, ‘All of Dharmadhatu (realm of phenomena/phenomena) came from our mind’. Everything is created by our hearts. The so-called symptoms are initially not symptoms whatsoever, it is just the mountains and water we encounter in our life. Our behaviours and mindsets determine if symptoms will be developed or not. For instance, when a person is reading book, he is always disturbed by his peripheral visions as well as other sound. Through the second stage, seeing the mountain not as a mountain, he accepted the peripheral visions and noises. He realises that symptoms are virtual, and that he was asking for it, created by himself. Consequently, he walks out of symptoms. However, he still has discriminations. He knows what is good, and what is bad, so that he can be aware when problems arise later on. But the fact is that the universe has no problems originally, so why do we need awareness? The fundamental reason for him having symptoms is that he is forcing himself not to be distracted when he is reading. He is repulsing and denying the reality. Therefore, the last step to bear fruit in Buddhist practice or to walk out of obsessions is to accept ourselves and everything on earth totally, not being forceful and doing whatever that is impossible to be accomplished. Then, you will realise, the mountain is still a mountain, water is still water, and reading is just reading. Everything is normal, everything is a natural process. They are not problems at all.

The two levels of change

Everyone knows Morita’s ‘let nature take its course, do what you should do’, and knows this is the right way. But there is always someone complaining, ‘I know that, but I fail to do that!’ ‘It is beneficial to me, but I cannot fully recover!’ Or ‘I have improved for a certain period of time, but symptoms repeat afterwards!’ Not only do patients have these confusions, a lot of my psychologist friends have them too. Therefore, they come to a conclusion that Morita Therapy can only bring temporary solutions, it can only relieve symptoms. But the fact is that they have not yet really understood Morita Therapy. Their misconception is caused by not understanding ‘let nature take its

course, do what you should do'. They only apply 'let nature take its course, do what you should do' on superficial symptoms, assuming that this is the true meaning of Morita Therapy.

In fact, there are two levels of change. 'let nature take its course', and 'do what you should do' are not only the attitude of treating our symptoms, but also the attitude of facing our true selves.

How do symptoms come to being? Symptoms are compelled, forced to appear because we want to escape from our true selves, because we want to compensate our lack of security, because we are always forcing ourselves, compelling ourselves, hoping to be good at everything, and hoping ourselves to be outstanding in everything, etc. These show that we have not 'let nature take its course', and 'do what we should do' in facing our real selves, we have not strived hard from our real selves.

The so-called symptoms are simply our attitude towards ourselves. They are only a reflection of our living attitude, which is the origin of our problems. And how do we change? Not only do we 'let nature take its course', and 'do what we should do' in treating superficial symptoms, but also do that in facing ourselves. Therefore, change is in two levels, not just one, change is from within and without ourselves, changing together.

In another word, we should accept our real selves, do not be forceful to ourselves, let nature take its course. To try your best within your current capability to live, to do well in life is already very fine. At the same time, we also accept and not to care about our superficial symptoms. You return to your real self to live, that is it.

The core reason for not being able to let go of perfectionism

OCD friends know that perfectionism is not good, and it is because of the aspiration of being perfect that makes them suffer and have obsessions. And yet, they cannot let go of perfectionism. A lot of friends ask me, 'Mr. Deng, I know the ideas, but I cannot let go of perfectionism, what can I do?' I will say, 'you understand the ideas, but you do not understand them thoroughly, so you are still unable to let go of it.'

Why do we aspire to obtain perfection? Very simple, because we want ourselves to be great, we want ourselves to be successful and outstanding. We all want to obtain recognitions and approval. This is very normal, everyone is like that. Water flows downward, and people want to rise higher up in the society. Our core goal of being perfect is to achieve success. But why do we equalise the aspiration for perfection with aspiration for success? Because in the past, we were being strictly educated by others (e.g. parents). Another reason is that we have idealized things, expecting that being perfect, without any flaws is the best. Isn't this the most successful? Therefore we move on with confusion in our live. But the problems have now arisen, you have strived to be perfect for so many years, forcing yourself, and yet have you succeeded? The reality is that success has not been obtained, on the contrary, you have obtained obsession. Why is that? It is because there is no

perfection on earth, simple as that. There can only be one result for striving for perfection, which is to fail again and again.

If this is so, why do we fail to let go of the trap of perfection? The answer is also rather simple, it is because we have mistakenly equalised perfection with success. You ask me to let go of perfection, isn't that the same as asking me to give up my aspirations and success? I cannot do that, I do not want to be good-for-nothing for my whole life! What I want to say is that not only you cannot do that, but also any other people-no one wants to give up their aspiration for success. Wishing ourselves to be great is our natural instinct. So here is the reason for not being able to let go of perfectionism: You have wrongly equalised striving to be perfect with striving for success.

In fact, by letting go of perfectionism, it does not mean that we are giving up our aspiration for success. It just means that we abandon the wrong attitude and method we have adopted to achieve success. And aspiring for perfection is that wrong attitude and method. So, please separate success from perfection. To conclude, we change because we want to find reasonable, effective methods and attitudes that can let us succeed. Such that we can really fulfil our dreams, and gain success!

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